Dec08
LIBRARY REDEEMER COLLEGE
777 GARNER RD E
ANCASTER ON L9K 1J4

PM# 40009999 R9375

CHRISTIAN COURIER

April 13, 2009 A Reformed Bimonthly No. 2861 $2.00

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36
APR 30 2009

63rd year of publication

Good news: Jesus has risen indeed!

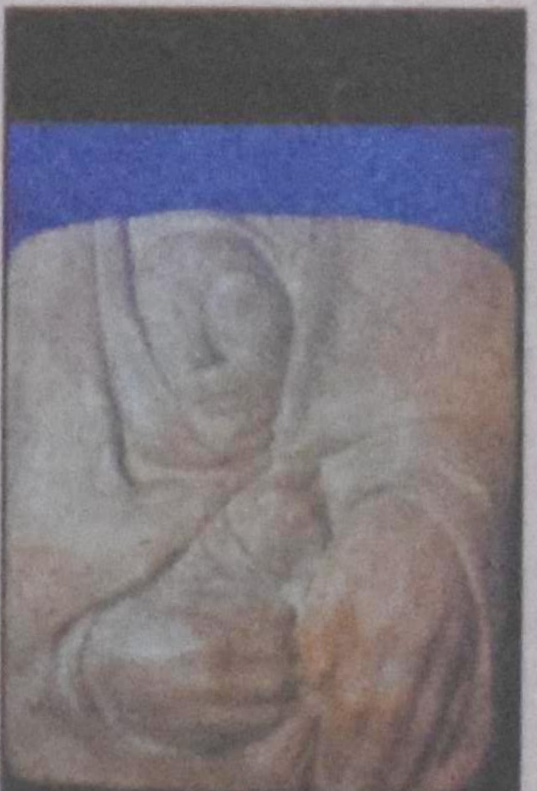
Calvin Seerveld

Unlike the crucifixion of Jesus Christ under Pontius Pilate in front of the taunting religious establishment and the Barrabas crowd, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not a public event. Among the biblical gospel writers Matthew says the most: a great earthquake, an angel looking like lightning rolling away the stone sealing the tomb, and the stricken Roman guards falling like dead men (Matthew 27:62-28:4). That's it.

Matthias Grünewald (died 1528) imaginatively painted what happened on the wing of an elaborate altarpiece situated in a monastic church connected to a hospital run by the order of St. Anthony in Isenheim (Alsace-Lorraine). The painting was finished (1515) shortly before Luther posted his 95 theses in Wittenberg. The Christ figure, showing the stigmata, floats up out of the funeral winding sheets almost as if already ascending above the earth. The rainbow-coloured aureole gives Christ's face, upper body, and hair a rather unearthly, not to say "mystical," golden appearance. But the huge rock, dishevelled stone coffin, and bowled-over men are tangibly real. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ was forceful! an exercise of God's miraculous, transfiguring power over the confining vaults of unmovable stone, armed guards, and death itself. The resurrection was as shocking as a bolt of lightning hitting a group of people in the dark.

Grünewald's painting could help rouse us again to the strange reality of the God-man Jesus Christ's being raised from the dead. We need to sense again the turning point of history from B.C. to A.D. After the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, followers of that Jesus do live in the certainty, as the apostle Paul says, that God will put all things under the feet of the Anointed One (I Corinthians 15). And that subjection includes the enemy of death. Whoever belongs to Jesus as an adopted child of God lives in the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit, and also faces one's death and the death of one's faithful loved ones with the confidence to be everlastingly safe.

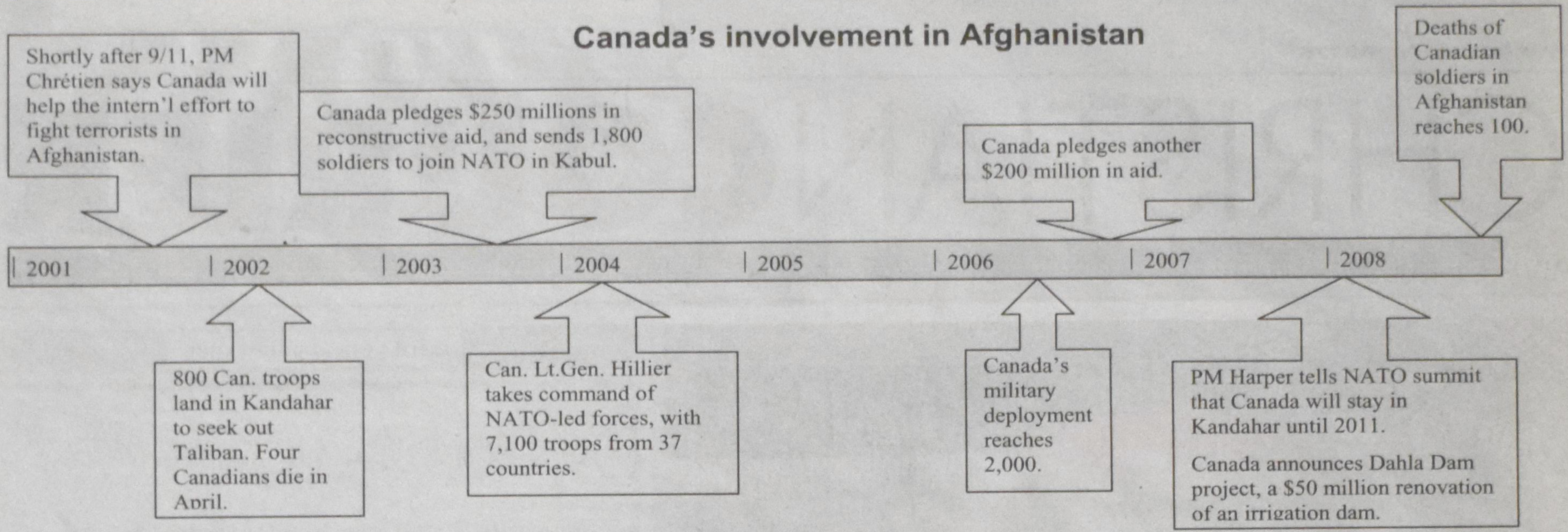
The bronze relief made by Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), "Rest in the peace of His hands" (1936), for her grave, testifies to such a biblical post mortem certainty. She lived and worked with her medical doctor husband among the urban poor. She lost a son in the European War of 1914-1918, and had a grandson killed in World War II (1939-45). So she came to hate war for the political failure war is. Hitler's Nazis in power banned her art which powerfully represented the suffering underclass of society. But (Mennonite-friendly) artist Kollwitz bravely witnessed to her faith that because of Jesus Christ's resurrection, she too would finally rest from her sorrows and labours peacefully in the hands and arms of Jesus.



As we celebrate Easter 2009 A.D., while Canadian soldiers keep dying in Afghanistan, and violence disrupts city streets throughout the drugged world, and one's elderly friends slowly tread the earth no more, let us not just remember the stupendous act of God in Jesus Christ's resurrection, but let us speak its hope to our neighbours by deeds of compassion, giving of our goods and our selves to those in need.

Calvin Seerveld emeritus
Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto

News



Losing Hearts and Minds in Afghanistan: Part II

Harold Alkema

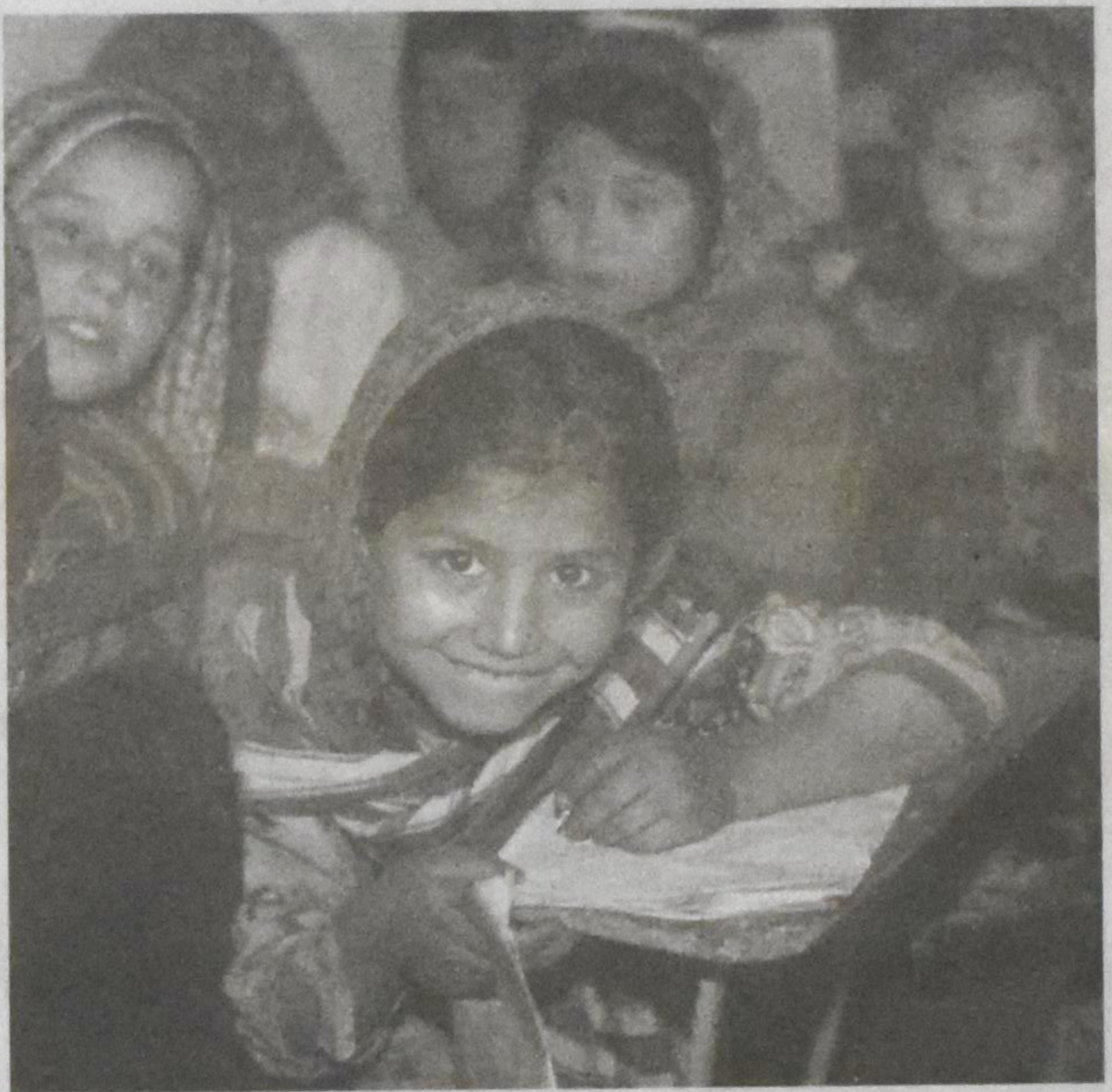
Winning Hearts and Minds, or WHAM as it's known in military speak, is a phrase that has been part of the language of US army and foreign policy planners since the days of the Vietnam War. As in Vietnam, the US-led coalition seems to be losing the hearts and minds of Afghans today. The people of Afghanistan have some good reasons to be disaffected.

Coalition tactics often fail to discriminate between the Taliban and innocent civilians. In 2008, foreign military air strikes were up by 40 per cent. One such attack in the town of Shindand killed 90 civilians. Foreign military policy has also been criticized locally for relying on corrupt Afghan run private security companies that are headed by former warlords with poor human rights records, who also stand accused of arming the Taliban for profit. The high civilian death toll and the renewed strength of the Taliban, who were all but eliminated only three or four years ago, seem to bear these criticisms out.

While the military situation is deteriorating, the economic and social situation in Afghanistan appears to be even more serious. The statistics speak for themselves (see sidebar).

Shortfalls in international aid

In order to address these social ills, the US and its partners have largely relied on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that have had little impact and have failed to win over Afghanistan's poor. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have enjoyed greater grassroots acceptance among Afghans and have had a better success rate as a result. Yet they only receive 10-15 per cent of the money supplied by foreign donors.



This Afghan girl has returned to school with the help of NGO Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (see w4wafghan.ca)

In the area of international aid there is also much cause for concern. The US has only given 50 per cent of the 10.4 billion dollars it pledged to Afghanistan for development. Likewise, the World Bank has given half of the 1.6 billion it promised. Other smaller donors have given 90 per cent of the funds they committed. Among these are Japan, Canada and Britain, which gave 1.3 billion of the 1.45 billion it promised. Afghanistan relies on foreign countries for 90 per cent of its public spending, thus any shortfall jeopardizes Afghanistan's hopes for the future.

Decline in women's rights

The issue of women's rights has also been a major problem. In 2004, there seemed to be much progress in this area. A liberal constitution entrenched the equality of men and women. Also in 2004, millions of Afghans turned out for elections as a gesture of support for democracy and equality. Of those who voted in the election, 40 per cent were women and women made up 28 per cent of the new Members of Parliament elected. Since the fall of the Taliban, the number of teachers increased seven times and again 28 per cent of new teachers were women.

In only four years, most of this liberalization has been reversed. Today, there is only one woman Member of Parliament. Women who take on public roles as teachers, journalists and human rights activists are harassed, beaten, raped and sometimes killed. In these situations, local police and military officials often take no action or support the perpetrators.

As Afghans watch their country slip back into widespread violence and witness the inability of western powers to help them in addressing their most basic needs while expending billions on military campaigns within their country, it is not surprising that they are becoming disheartened. If the US and its partners want to legitimately win the hearts and minds of Afghans, they will have to do something to affect the material needs of Afghanistan's poor and endorse policies that provide real security and justice.

Harold Alkema has a Master's Degree in History from the University of Waterloo. He currently works as a researcher in Ottawa with a private firm specializing mainly in Native Affairs issues and historical research. Part I of this series was printed in the March 23 issue.

Afghan and International NGOs

Afghan organisations:

1) Co-operation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) works to promote peace, social justice and awareness of human rights. Their Fight for Peace project teaches women and girls to box.
2) Organisation for Promoting Afghan Women's Capabilities (OPAWC) funds medical teams, schools and literacy projects. Its leader is Malalai Joya, a parliamentarian and warlord critic.
3) AH5787 is touring Afghanistan presenting a theatrical production that highlights human rights abuses but also tries to inspire hope for ordinary Afghans.

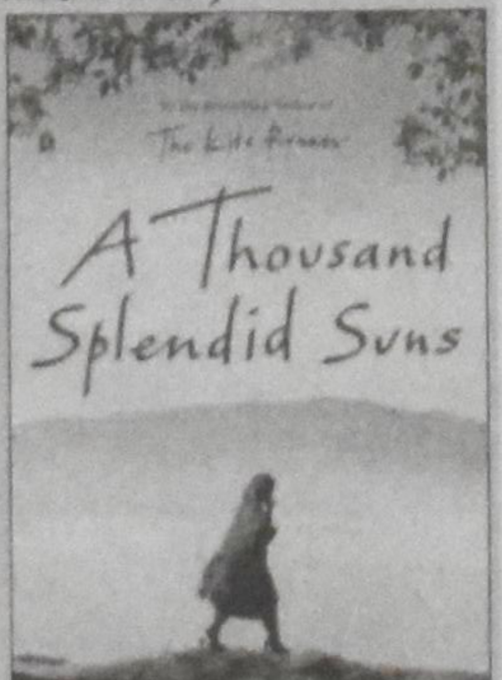
International organisations:

1) AfghanAid has worked alongside Afghan communities for over 20 years. It focuses on long-term, sustainable development in rural areas and provides micro-finance for women as well as health and education services.
2) Womankind works in partnership with three Afghan women's organisations to address violence against women.
3) International Committee of the Red Cross / Red Crescent (ICRC) runs programs for landmine victims and visits persons detained by Afghan and NATO authorities.

Adapted from New Internationalist, *November 2008*

Afghanistan today

- life expectancy is 49 years (in Canada it's 83)
- only 23 per cent of the country has access to safe drinking water
- 12 per cent has proper sanitation
- Afghanistan's rate of maternal mortality is the second highest in the world, at 1,800 per every 100,000 births
- 39 per cent of Afghan children are malnourished
- 1 in 4 children die before their fifth birthday
- 2 million Afghan children (60 per cent) cannot attend school
- 82 per cent of adults are illiterate



This popular book details life in Afghanistan for women.

Hope

Where the heart is: Offering hope to the homeless

Angela Reitsma Bick

Almost fifteen years ago, Debra Tigchelaar moved to an affordable house in the country. It was a place where, with her three children, she could heal from a separation and divorce. While she was outside one day, she had a vision of creating a similar home for other struggling women and their children. Wouldn't it be wonderful, she thought, if such women could live, rent-free, in a peaceful country setting?

At first, Tigchelaar had to set her dream aside for more practical matters. The vision never left her, however. Seven years later she connected with a farm couple who had a home they wanted to use "for God's purposes." It was an enormous heritage home, and after hearing of Tigchelaar's journey, the couple agreed to rent her the house for one dollar a year. Ross and Linda Drummond's generosity was, according to Tigchelaar, "totally a God thing, bigger than anything I could ever think of."

It took three years to complete the renovations and fill the home. In 2005, Drummond House opened its doors to women and children in the community of Waterdown, Ontario as a registered charity. The house has individual rooms for four families and a shared dining room. It offers courses in parenting, Biblical teaching, financial and legal coaching, and other life skills. Over the past four years, over thirty-five women and children have lived in Drummond House.

Today, well over 100 volunteers manage, run and assist in the home. Many volunteers note that the interaction is invaluable; outsiders are able to move beyond judging the women to seeing things they have in common. As Tigchelaar says, "We don't want to reduce the work here to numbers and beds, but keep the heart in all we do."

To buy a cookbook that supports Drummond House, visit drummondhouse.ca

One woman's journey to Drummond House

I first heard about Drummond House from family members who worked there when the house was in its initial renovations stages. I never thought that one day I would need to stay there.

When I came to live at Drummond House, I had so many issues. I was like a damaged car in desperate need of repair.

The staff at Drummond House connected me to an assortment of resources – a great church for spiritual guidance and also personal, one-on-one counselling to help me make informed decisions to improve my mental outlook. I also had financial counselling and, when it was time to return home, I received donations of much needed furniture and food to restock my kitchen cupboards.

I would like to encourage any women who are living in an abusive relationship to consider staying at Drummond House. Don't give up hope. As painful as it is, letting go of people and situations you can't control can be the wisest course of action. Don't be afraid to take small steps – you are not alone.

I think the best thing about Drummond House is the people who are involved with the House on all levels, from administration to cooking meals. The people who are associated with Drummond House showed the love of Jesus Christ to me when my life was filled with darkness and despair. What I've become in the process is more valuable than what I had on the other side of it and I am forever grateful.

–one of the first residents of Drummond House

Principalities & Powers
David T. Koyzis

David: a flawed king

I have always had an affinity for the biblical David, who is second only to Moses in the esteem of the people of Israel down through the centuries. Initially, of course, this personal affinity had everything to do with my sharing his name, an awareness that came already in early childhood. Furthermore, David not only founded a dynasty that ruled for some five centuries, but he was also the ancestor of Jesus himself, "great David's greater Son."

Moreover, I have a great love for the Psalms, many of which are ascribed to David, who, like me, was a poet and musician. The struggles David expresses in these heartfelt stanzas are ones with which most of us can identify in some measure.

Finally, I have inherited my namesake's interest in politics. Throughout much of scripture, David is seen as the paradigmatic monarch, a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), who sang God's praises and led his people to victory against their enemies.

Not a particularly good king

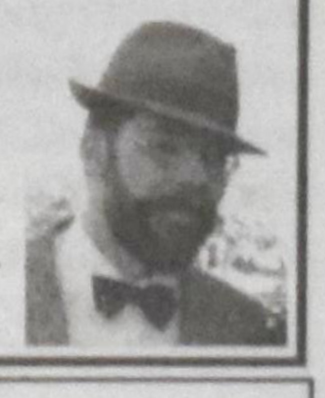
But as I've been reading through the Davidic episodes in 1 and 2 Samuel in recent weeks, I've been struck by the recognition that, in many respects, David was not a particularly good king. His reign was an exceedingly turbulent one, marked by warfare, rebellion and filial betrayal. He was a poor administrator and appears to have been propped up by his powerful nephew Joab, to whom he owed his political position. David loved his sons deeply but seemed unable to control them or to command their loyalty. He allowed his personal affections and private allegiances to overwhelm his public duties, especially as his mourning over Absalom's death appeared to manifest an ingratitude to those who had risked so much to save his throne. Once more Joab had to rescue him from his poor judgement (2 Samuel 19:1-8).

Worst of all, David had one of his own soldiers killed so he could take his wife for himself, which incurred the wrath of God as expressed through the prophet Nathan (1 Samuel 11-12). Yet David repented and sought forgiveness (Psalm 51 is associated with this incident), which God freely granted while not exempting him from the consequences of this flagrant infraction of his law.

Finally, David appears to have been given to snap judgements based on hearsay, as seen in the case of Ziba's slander of Jonathan's son Meribaal (2 Samuel 16:1-5, 19:24-30). In short, even the *justice* of David's rule is in doubt, in stark contrast to the evident wisdom of his son Solomon (1 Kings 3).

Nevertheless, somehow, through all this David remained a man after God's own heart. Despite his evident flaws, he was still chosen by God to rule his people, "for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Though most of David's descendants were wicked rulers, God remained faithful to his promise to him, maintaining a dynasty that would culminate in the King of kings, whose suffering and death we have just recalled during Lent.

Of course Lent also reminded us of our own sins, which weigh upon us and poison our actions and relationships with others. I personally find it comforting that, if God could love so flawed a servant as David, he can and will love us too, despite our failings. It is this hope of salvation in Christ that sustains us as we celebrate the feast of his Resurrection.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of the award-winning Political Visions and Illusions *(InterVarsity Press). His blog can be found at:* <http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/>.

Yes, it's really tax free

Tax shelter more of your investment income and save for goals that benefit you and your family - a vacation, a big purchase, long term care, even your legacy.

Talk to us today to determine how the Tax-Free Savings Account[1] TFSA) could fit into your overall plan. You put the money in, you get the money and growth back out - the government doesn't take a share.

Save for your goals faster and free of Federal tax[2].

[1] In 2009, maximum contribution of $5000 per person 18 years of age and over.
[2] Provincial taxation on TFSAs has not yet been confirmed by all provinces. Talk to your Investors Group Consultant about the proposed rules in your province.

™ Trademarks owned by IGM Financial Inc. and licensed to its subsidiary corporations.

CLARENCE WEIMA CFP
Senior Financial Consultant

1-800-488-9817
(24 hrs)
clarence.weima@investorsgroup.com

The Plan by Investors Group
Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

OBERAMMERGAU TOURS 2010

We are pleased to offer a variety of tours to Oberammergau.

Departure	Tour Host
May 18	Dr.Bill Mundt
May 25	John DeSchiffart
June 22	Rev.David Sherbino
June 29	Rev.John Klomps
July 06	Rev.Mike Sherbino
August 31	Rev.George Anderson
Sept.21	Earl Clint

These tours offer a variety of itineraries and are handled by the Aurora office. For tour details visit our website at:
www.verstraetetravel.com

AMSTERDAM FLIGHTS 2009

Martinair has stopped flying from Canada.
We can offer you charter flights on ***Air Transat*** as well as ***KLM Royal Dutch Airlines***.
Contact the St.Catharines office for a competitive quote.
Shop and book online www.verstraetetravel.com

VERSTRAETE TRAVEL & CRUISES
36 Secord Drive, St.Catharines ON L2N 1K8
Tel.**905 934-4414** or long distance **1800 405-6088**
email: niagara@verstraete.com

Editorials

Obama's kaleidoscopic faith

Peter Schuurman

After the Rev. Jeremiah Wright scandal wore off, little has been said about the faith of Barack Obama. His faith, like the rest of his approach to life, embodies a high tolerance level for inner tensions. More so than any past President, his identity holds within it a multiplicity of identities.

He is black/white, African/American, East Coast/West Coast, inner-city worker/lawyer. He has consistently invited colourful, if not incompatible, people onto his platform of power. Take for example the two official prayers offered at his inauguration: the morning prayer was by the gay Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson and the inaugural prayer was given by the evangelical mega-church pastor Rick Warren.

Obama contains within himself diverse if not conflicting commitments, and his own faith life is no different. His biography sets the stage: he is the first President not to have been raised in a Christian home. His father and step-father were Muslim, while his mother was a secular humanist. While he attended a Christian school in Hawaii he was being raised by his Unitarian grandparents.

The recently published book *The Faith of Barack Obama* by Stephen Mansfield (Thomas Nelson, 2008) gathers together relevant published material to give a window into Obama's soul. It records him saying, "In our household the Bible, the Koran, and the Bhagavad-Gita sat on the shelf alongside books of Greek and Norse and African mythology. On Easter or Christmas Day my mother might drag me to church, just as she dragged me to the Buddhist temple, the Chinese New Year celebration, the Shinto shrine, and ancient Hawaiian burial sites."

Faith like Jazz

Obama is perfectly at ease with what might send others into a logical tailspin. He said to a *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist, "I'm rooted in the Christian tradition," and in the next breath: "I believe there are many paths to the same place." He goes on to say he's not even sure there is a heaven or hell. "I think that religion at its best comes with a big dose of doubt," he said elsewhere. His religion is "a faith that admits doubt, and uncertainty, and mystery."

Christianity is not his only religious commitment. As he explains, "Alongside my own deep personal faith, I am a follower, as well, of our civic religion. I am a big believer in the separation of church and state. I am a big believer in our constitutional structure."

Mansfield says that Obama, like most younger people in America, does faith like jazz music: "informal, eclectic, and often without theme. They have largely rejected organized religion in favor of a religious pastiche that works for them. They think nothing of hammering together a personal faith from widely differing religious traditions, and many acquire their theology the same way they catch colds: through casual contact with strangers."

Mansfield is uncomfortable with the less systematic, unpredictable character of jazz music. Jazz music, however, is not a free-for-all cacophony. The ability to play with different instruments and discordant notes and make a song can be a sophisticated enterprise. Not just anyone can manage the combination of spontaneity, musical skill, and teamwork that good jazz requires.

A Versatility beyond Singularity

Obama's kaleidoscope of religious connections is less centered on the life, death and return of Christ than orthodoxy allows. He is also known to be rather cocky. His faith may rest more in his own abilities than anything else (a constant theme in David Mendell's book *Obama: From Promise to Power.* Harper, 2007). At worst, his multiple identities may become a rowdy "legion" within him (Mark 5:9).

Still, his versatility in relationship is instructive as so far as it signals a shift beyond the rationalist enlightenment self – the self-reliant, self-motivated, self-directing human being. He is reaching out beyond himself – a model of "being with"– what Russian Christian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin called "the dialogical self."

If you think about it, we are a community within ourselves. We all come from an egg and a sperm which were themselves a product of an egg and a sperm. We are also persons in communion – constituted by our relationships with God, nature, and others. Many of those others may not be Christians, but they are a part of us. We are all more than pure – a jumble of faith and doubt and even unfaith.

There is something nimble about Obama. He marks a new day for America, not just because he is black, but because he is half-black and much more besides. He opens a new door to global diversity that has connected with everyone from Canadians to Kenyans.

America was founded on the rhetoric of religious freedom and diversity – but in an exclusively Western context. Obama's de-centering pluralistic approach opens up a Pandora's box of possibilities, the best of which might be a wider, more principled pluralism. That is to say, a culture in which people may live the thick particularity of their religious convictions but also participate fully in the public square.

"We are no longer just a Christian nation," Obama has maintained. In his inaugural speech, he specified: "We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus – and nonbelievers."

We will see where this leads. Unlike other Democrats, Obama is not shy about faith. Mansfield reports him saying, "Secularists are wrong when they ask believers to leave their religion at the door before entering into the public square." This will hopefully lead to "a new way forward" with Muslims, a way beyond crude culture wars toward a more hospitable public space for religious language and global dialogue.

Peter Schuurman lives in Guelph, Ontario, where he parents his two children, Joseph and Petra. He is also part-time faculty at Redeemer University College, where he teaches World Religions.

Christian Courier

Founded in 1945

An independent bimonthly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Op-Ed Editor: Bert Witvoet **bert.witvoet@sympatico.ca**
News Editor: Angela Reitsma Bick **angela@christiancourier.ca**
Feature Editor: Brett Alan Dewing **brett@christiancourier.ca**
Church Page Editor: Marion Van Til **marianvantil@roadrunner.com**
Contributing Editor: Peter Schuurman **eternalstudent@sympatico.ca**
Circulation/Fam.ads: Rose der Nederlanden **rose@christiancourier.ca**
Admin/Bus.ads/Web: Ineke Medcalf-Strayer **ads@christiancourier.ca**

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact circulation if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

Christian Courier
5 Joanna Dr, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Web site: www.christiancourier.ca

Publications Mail Registration No. 09375

We acknowledge the assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs. Canada

A light tap on my shoulder

Bert Witvoet

Someone once wrote about communion and the fact that there is nothing special about eating the bread and drinking the wine. I believe he was saying that a mystical experience was not in the (synodically approved) cards for him.

I must say that I tend to vacillate between the austere Zwinglian approach and the other more mysterious varieties when it comes to experiencing the Lord's Supper. I heartily believe that the Lord's Supper is more than a sign or memorial, but there are times that I can't make it come true for myself. This one Sunday morning it was different, in an unexpected way. I had been thinking about the comment made by the aforementioned person and had asked myself, Will you experience the presence of Christ this morning? Will it be more than a sign for you?

As the serving of the supper progressed in the front, two guitarists and a flautist began to lead us into reflective songs. The quiet, sensitively played music began to work on me. I felt myself going into an attitude of peaceful acceptance of the love of God. We sang or listened to songs such as "I am the bread of life" by Sister Toolan; "I come with joy to meet my Lord, forgiven, loved and free" (Psalter Hymnal 311); "The Lord my shepherd rules my life and gives me all I need" (Psalter Hymnal 23). At times like these I much prefer the quiet, articulate plucking of strings to the sustained and at times overwhelming sounds of an organ, beautiful as they may be at other times. Some of the verses I sang, others I listened to with closed eyes.

Communal emphasis

Before communion began, our pastor had encouraged us to come to the front in groups as much as possible. "If you see a single person, include him in your family or group of friends," he had said. I noticed a single person sitting behind me, whom I know very well. He's from Africa. I turned around and asked him if he wanted to go up with us. He smiled and said he was planning to join the people next to him. I was glad he felt free enough to make that move. So my wife and I got up and moved towards the front, where the bread and wine were being given at four stations.

Halfway there, I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was Mary (not her real name), a single mother from the housing development down the road, with whom my wife, who was an elder at that time, had been deeply involved, and who had been sitting behind the young man. She asked if *she* could go up with us. I guess she had taken her cue from my invitation to the other person. We gladly enfolded her as we went, as well as another woman who was alone near us. The four of us went to the two elders, listened to their words of invitation and comfort and partook of the Lord's body and blood.

When we returned from the front, I saw my wife going to sit by Mary. Mary was visibly troubled and needed support. The music and singing continued: "As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends; the love that made us, makes us one, and strangers now are friends." I thanked God for my wife's ministry, and I felt that I had truly experienced Christ's presence in the communion.

Christ among us

Why was that? I think it was the Holy Spirit who had worked this "presence" into me. It was not just the eating of the bread nor the drinking of the wine by itself. All of that played a role. But it was primarily the communion with each other and the Lord that cast a glow of transubstantiation over the supper. And somehow the music had played its role too. And may I add that the light tap on my shoulder, which I vividly remember even now, felt as if Christ had gently touched me?

I have little theology to offer for this phenomenon. But I know that experiencing the presence of Christ works best when we die with him, or, should I say, "When we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

How have you nurtured faith in your children?

Here are some of the responses we received when we asked our readers that question.

Model faithfulness

Nurturing a child's faith is a heavy task. A child has to learn to walk, that takes time, and it is the same with faith. He or she will get there with prayer. We should be an example in our own life, praying for God's guidance all the way. We did this by having an open home for strangers, strays and friends; by taking in a refugee family; and by participating in the work of building (literally) the church and local Christian schools.

Alida Brinkman, Whitby, ON

Pray without ceasing

Responding to your question is difficult. Thinking back on my long life, there are so many mistakes one makes. However, there is only one thing on the top of the list. PRAYER. Even before the child was born, we prayed. We prayed, "Lord, give us a child that loves you." And we tried to teach our children about the Lord the best we could. When possible, we sent them to a Christian school. One of my sons once told me he learned a lot about the Reformed faith in catechism. At least you know your children are covenant children. God promised, "You are mine!"

A 91 year-old reader of CC (mother of ten, grandmother of 32, great-grandmother of 30).

Demonstrate integrity

In addition to various other means, I think the primary way I nurture faith in my daughters is to *model an authentic faith* to them. By this, I do not mean to model Christ or holiness to them, but rather, to model *the authentic striving after* Christ-likeness and holiness. In the long run it helps my children's faith if they can see that Daddy still strongly believes even though he is not perfect and struggles to be a good Christian as faithfully as he can.

One of the main things I model is honesty. Honesty includes confessing, "I don't know" or "I'm not sure" when that is the case with spiritual questions they ask. Depending on the question and their age level, I sometimes suggest that we try and find the answer together – modeling for them how to find resources – reading the Bible, bible dictionaries, commentaries, or going to the library – that might be able to answer their questions. Often we talk it through and reason out together the best answer we currently have. Again, I think it nurtures my children's faith more if they see that I can still believe even when I don't have everything figured out.

Finally, honesty obviously includes not deceiving or lying to them. I don't deliberately tell them something I don't believe is true myself – especially about God and spirituality – unless it's some kind of inside joke between us. I might say that "I'm not sure if it's truly correct, but many people believe this," if the theological truth might be too abstract for their age level and I have to resort to Sunday School clichés which I believe are inadequate or inaccurate.

Another example is Santa Claus. My daughters know that Santa is a mythical figure from a real-life legendary Bishop. We talked about the good in the legend and how it is distorted and the possible harm that it now brings – making children care only for gifts and toys. Instead, my daughters give gifts to each other at Christmas, help us the parents put gifts under the tree, and we encourage instead the spirit of giving as an act of love, just as God gave his son to us out of his love. I think it is damaging to children's faith if they grow up and find out that their parents have deliberately deceived them about Santa Claus, as it erodes their trust in their parents, and, perhaps, even in the reliability of God and Christ.

Shiao Chong, Christian Reformed Chaplain at York University, Toronto. Chong and his wife Martha have three daughters ages 10, 7 and 2.

Highlight baptism

"Baptism opens one's soul to the reality of God; a spark of faith is ignited," a Roman Catholic deacon once wrote in our local newspaper. "It cannot be extinguished, and may come to life at any time. God is at work and he will not forsake the dear people on whom he once laid his hand."

Parents, friends and fellow church members present at the baptism ceremony pledge that they will "pray for them, help instruct them in the faith, and encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers." How do we keep our pledge?

We are thankful that we have shared with our children what it means to live in Christ. Something church communities can do to make a young couples' child's baptism more meaningful is to give them a colourful, framed baptism certificate.

A picture of the parents holding the baby may hang on the wall with the certificate in our child's bedroom, to be talked about as the child grows older.

When our kid becomes a teenager – pray God – the framed picture(s) may stay in sight. When he or she leaves the parents' home the baptism certificate – pray God – may accompany the young man or woman and be treasured because of associations of younger years pleasantly remembered.

Their Christian friends, when visiting, will have a contact point when they see it hanging on the wall and honor a pledge they once made.

After the service, when our pastor's baby was baptized we took a picture of his family and him holding up the framed certificate. Soon after, I received a thank you note from his wife. "Dear Mike, your effort in framing Joshua's baptism certificate made it all the more special. There's already a spot in his room for it."

Mike Tulp, Orillia, ON

What do you think?

Whether you think of it as an economic crisis or a temporary slump, not many would deny that the times are a-changing. How have economic changes affected your family, community and church, and how have you responded?

Please send your reply or any letter to the editor to **angela@christiancourier.ca**. We will publish your answer in the May 11 issue.

The editors

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association

Canada Mail:
PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40009999
REGISTRATION NO. 9375
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
CHRISTIAN COURIER
5 JOANNA DR
ST. CATHARINES ON L2N 1V1
email: **subscriptions@christiancourier.ca**

U.S. Mail:
Christian Courier
(USPS 518-090)
Second-class postage paid at Lewiston NY
Postmaster: send address changes to: Christian Courier, Box 110 Lewiston NY 14092

Subscriptions:	**Canada (G.S.T. incl.)**	**USA**	**Overseas**
one yr. (24 issues)	$44.00	$44.00 US	$85.00
two yrs. (48 issues)	$85.00	$85.00 US	

Advertising deadlines: display and classified advertising: Wednesday, 9 a.m. (12 days before publication date) See classified pages or web site **www.christiancourier** for more details. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Address all correspondence to: 5 Joanna Dr, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838
e-mail: Advertising: ads@christiancourier.ca
Subscriptions: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca

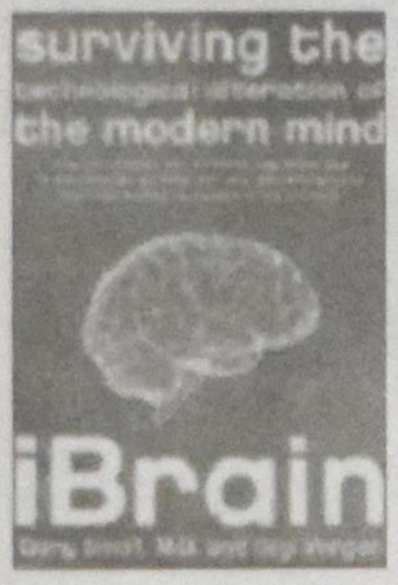
PRINTED IN CANADA

Technically Speaking
Derek Schuurman

The Net and your brain

Derek Schuurman

Many thinkers have argued that technology is not neutral, that it is, in fact, "value-laden". Neil Postman, author of Technopoly and other books, has argued that the designers of technology embed their personal or corporate values into technical artifacts. As a result, technological objects are biased towards certain uses, which in turn biases a user to use them in a particular way. This leads me to wonder what values are embedded into our digital tools and how they bias the way we work and interact.



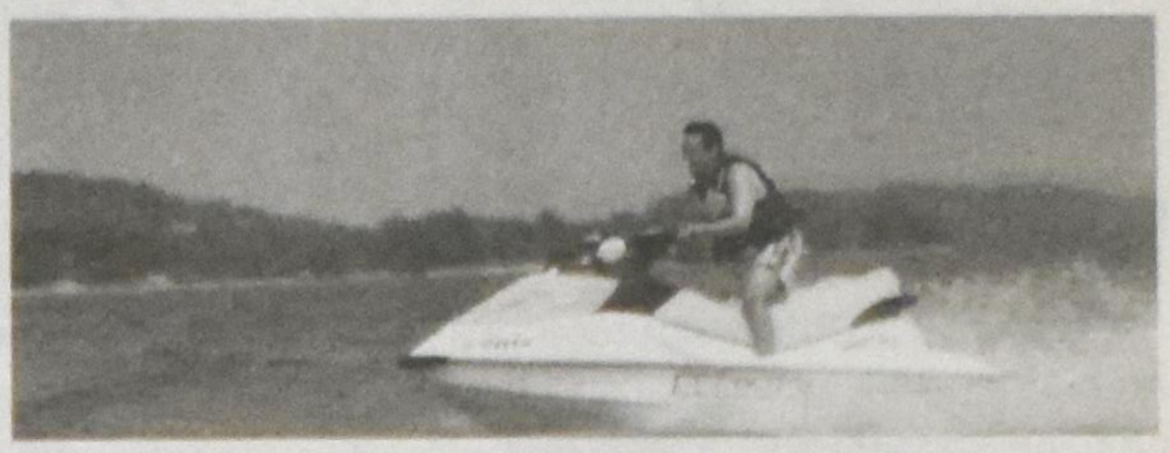
But it appears that technology not only changes things, it may also change our brains. In his recent book *iBrain: Surviving the Technical Alteration of the Modern Mind,* a leading neuro-scientist named Gary Small has explored how the web and modern digital media are changing the structure of our brains. Although it seems that multi-tasking and web surfing can accelerate learning, it may also lead to attention deficit disorder, Internet addictions, and social isolation. He writes that the digital revolution has "plunged us into a continuous state of partial attention" and in this state people "no longer have time to reflect, contemplate, or make thoughtful decisions." Instead, we are driven to distraction.

Losing our scuba gear

Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.

These changes have a particular impact on the development of younger "digital natives" who have been exposed to digital culture since childhood. Younger people have more malleable brains, which are shaped and molded in part by the digital environment in which many of them are immersed. According to Small, brains can adapt to more rapid-fire cyber surfing, but overexposure to online activities can also cause the pathways for human interaction to atrophy. In November 2008, *Macleans Magazine* had an article entitled ""Dumbed Down: The Troubling Science of How Technology is Rewiring Kids' Brains" which highlighted this same issue.

In another article entitled "Is Google Making us Stupid?" author Nicholas Carr laments that the Net has diminished his capacity for concentration and his ability to read long books. He states: "My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski." Deep reading has given way to "skimming" as users click through hyperlinks and bounce from site to site.



Small claims that this unrelenting bombardment of data can lead to a type of "brain strain" that leaves people feeling as if they are in a "digital fog". Some of the suggestions from Small to avoid "techno-brain burnout" include the need to set limits and to balance on-line and off-line time.

Digital Discernment

It seems that as we discover more about the creational laws of computing and our technologies advance we also need to discern more about computing "norms". What are appropriate and normative ways to use, limit, and balance the use of computer technology?

Last fall, Redeemer University College students were encouraged to commit to an "e-fast" during which they were asked to give up or limit one of their digital activities (such as video games, social networking, e-mailing, instant messaging etc.) for one week. Many students (and professors – including this one) discovered how challenging this simple challenge turned out to be. At the end of the week, one student shared during a chapel time how her "e-fast" led to wonderful changes in her personal devotional life.

We need to discern that there is a need for boundaries and limits in our use of our digital tools, and that real face-to-face communication is an important part of being human. And perhaps in a bustling digital world that clamors for our continuous partial attention, we need to re-learn how to take time for reflection and devotions. As in the story of Mary and Martha, many of us need to strive to set aside our many digital distractions to take time to sit at the Master's feet and listen.

Dr. Derek Schuurman (dschuurman@cs.redeemer.ca) teaches full-time in the Department of Computer Science at Redeemer University College. Derek and his wife Carina have 4 children and they live in Hamilton on the "mountain". Web: http://cs.redeemer.ca/derek/

Country Living
M. van der Galien

Retirees living in remote rural settings and loving it

Sometimes I'm perplexed by where people build their homes. And it really baffles me where some people choose to live in their retirement years. Why build a huge expensive house in a hayfield? If you're going to spend all that money, why not have a place with a view?

Recently, I saw a huge new house built on a high sloping field. There's a farm with cattle on either side of the mansion. It's not a farmer living there, but a doctor. The house probably cost over a million dollars. There's no river or lake nearby, no scenic sights, no trees around the house.

I admire young couples just starting out who buy an inexpensive lot and build an affordable small home. A year later the property is neatly landscaped and there's a green lawn. A happy couple that works diligently can convert a rough piece of land and make a home for themselves.

Our new house

Two years ago we had our cottage torn down and had a new house with a walk-out basement built. It's 50 feet up from a beautiful small lake. We can see the water from the many windows, including the bedroom windows. What a sight to see the moon's reflection on the lake at night! The house has all the conveniences of a modern home. Last September we got married on the lawn and deck overlooking the pristine lake.

Our new digs (retirement home) is at the end of a one-kilometer private road that is used by 14 cottagers during the summer months. The rest of the year our closest neighbour is three kilometers away. Our farm is a 10-minute drive away but a little longer in the winter. My wife, Mae, a semi-retired nurse, loves it there – even alone when I'm at the farm. She loves the quietness and living among nature. We see otters playing on the ice, pileated woodpeckers pecking in trees, wild turkeys feeding nearby, deer, chipmunks, squirrels and many birds at the feeders.

A few years ago I accompanied a farm implement salesman on his rounds up into the hills, mountains and valleys of old Irish, Scottish, German and Polish settlements off the Opeongo Line (mountain ridge) in our county. What an eye opener! We drove up/down long winding roads climbing up huge hills. Nestled in those hills and valleys were old farmsteads. It was an awesome experience! It was as if we were on a row of hilltops.

I remember in particular one place that seemed far from civilization. The man we visited had grown up on the homestead and left home at an early age to work in a car plant in Oshawa. He married and raised a family in the city. Now retired, he and his wife moved back to the homestead after his parents died.

The couple wanted to live their remaining years in the country. The natural choice was to return to his roots. They made some changes to the old place. They garden, read, relax and putter. He hunts and fishes.

The couple lives a simple life and enjoys every minute of it. It is as if they are living on top of the world. The scenery is breathtaking.

Catharine

Living in big cities for most of her life, Catharine longed for solitude. She found it in a piece of densely wooded property going deep down to a ravine. A carpenter built her a cabin on a ridge deep down in a gully. A few times over the years she called me when she had problems with trespassers, garden soil and sometimes just to chat. She got to know me from the columns I wrote for the paper in her area. I always made time to listen to her, knowing she lives a very secluded life – only going out to church and to get groceries.

I visited her twice in the last 10 years. We had tea and cookies and talked about many things, including politics and religion.

She called me last June and asked if I would stop by later that summer. My construction project and upcoming marriage had kept me extremely busy. Mae and I will visit her this spring. She wants to meet my wife. I know they'll be talking about spiritual things. I think I'll do what every smart married man does when they are in the company of women – just listen, speaking occasionally.

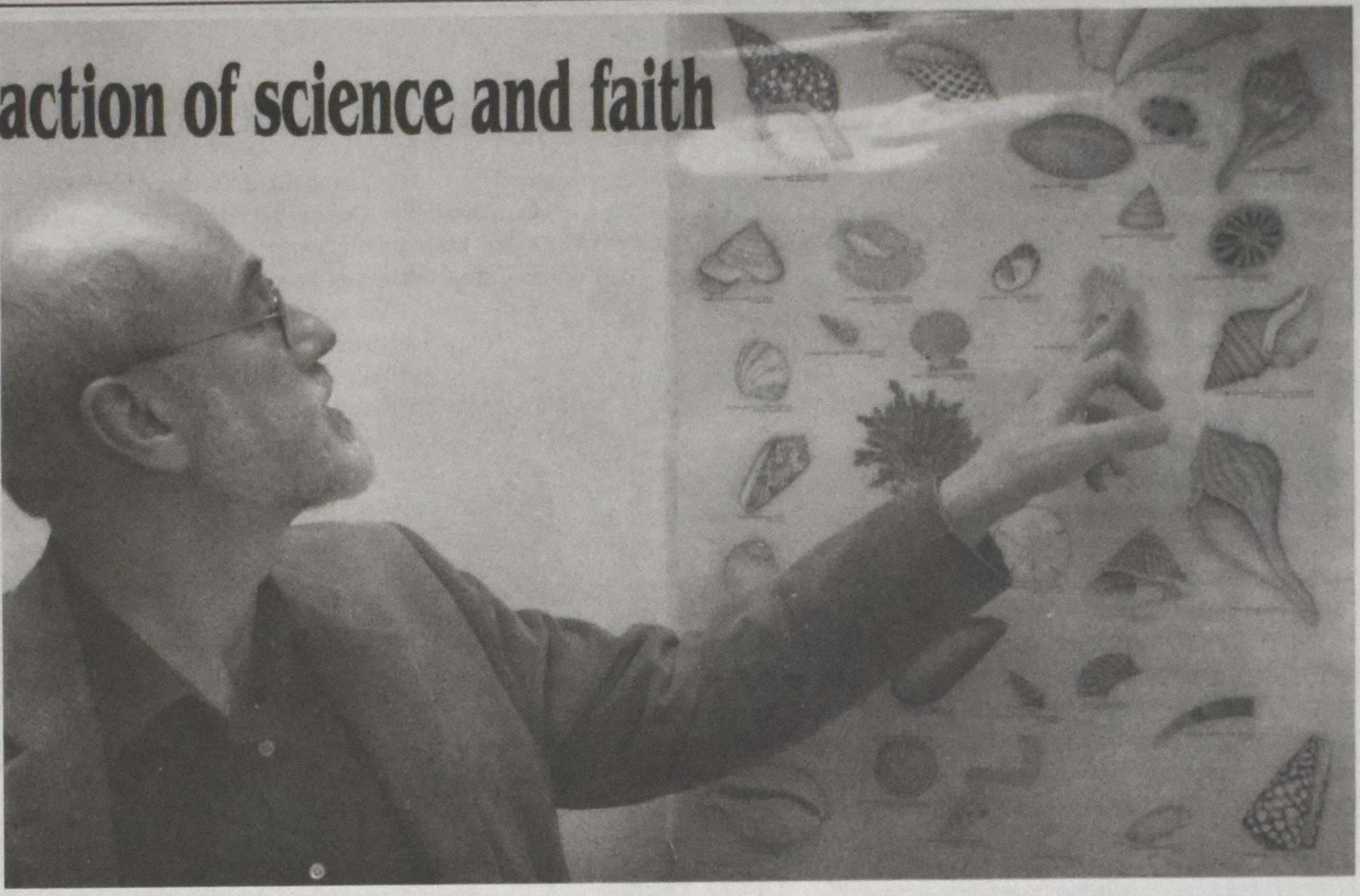
Imagine a 70-something year-old woman living deep down in a wooded valley 12 months of the year with only a footpath up to a gravel road.

I'll take the hayfield.

Maynard van der Galien likes his privacy. He and Mae love it at their new home at the lake.

Science

At arm's length: the interaction of science and faith



Angela Reitsma Bick

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Darwin's Origin of the Species, as well as 200 years since Darwin's own origin. The theory of evolution remains influential, and debates on creation and evolution are far from over. CC talked with Christian biologist Dr. Jitse van der Meer on belief, modern science and Darwin.

CC: You have three degrees in biology and one in the philosophy of science. What first drew you to this area of study?

Dr. Jitse van der Meer: The biology goes back to when I was young, in the Netherlands. In the summers we would always go on vacation to the islands, and my parents gave me a little booklet of what you can find on the beach. That's how I got interested in biology. I am fascinated by the beauty, the colors and shapes of shells. Well, those shells are dead things, and I was beginning to ask about the living things behind it.

In high school, also in the Netherlands, we had a biology teacher who turned out to be the first scientific creationist in Europe – Nicolaas Rupke – and he introduced me to questions of creation and evolution. I found out that you can't really answer all these questions on a scientific basis; this is where my interest in history and philosophy of science comes from.

Can you define scientific creationist?

There are many different kinds. But to keep it simple, let's say that there are old earth creationists and young earth creationists. Scientific creationists think that you can use texts in the Bible as information in science.

Why do you think Christians hold such a variety of views on creation and evolution?

I think the main reason is not to do with the science, although that is usually where the debates are taking place. The real reason is the concern about the interpretation of Scripture. Some people say, "If Genesis 1 is not literally true, then is the rest of the Bible really true?" And if you put it that way, then that would be a genuine concern. That's where the real issue lies.

It seems like Darwin's ideas are still powerful. Why do you think he has been so influential?

I think it's because the biological theory of evolution has been taken to imply all kinds of things for the meaning of human life. It's taken not merely as a theory, but as something that supports a certain kind of worldview that speaks to who we are, where we are going and what our aim is in life. The difficulty is to distinguish between the theory and the interpretations in terms of worldviews. Atheists and materialists, for example, use Darwin's theory to defend an atheist or materialist worldview. This is another reason why many Christians have negative ideas about his theory.

Can you briefly summarize what you mean by his theory?

Darwin believed that all living things had evolved from one or a few ancestors by means of variation and natural selection.

So if we go back simply to Darwin's theory, without how it was later interpreted, then it is not such a threat to Christians or to Christian beliefs?

No, I don't think so. First of all, contemporary evidence for his theory is very strong. But secondly, there are ways of dealing with the concerns about the interpretation of Scripture. There is internal Scriptural evidence in Genesis 1 showing that it is not to be used as if it satisfied the requirements of the natural sciences. As far as I'm concerned, that solves the problem.

The natural sciences don't threaten the Bible; what threatens the Bible are ideologies that abuse historical or scientific scholarship to promote their quasi-religious agendas over against the Bible.

What would you suggest is the least that Christians should know about Darwin in order to converse intelligently with loyal followers of evolution?

Many people think that Darwin lost his faith because of his evolutionary thinking. That may have been part of it, but there were two other events. On a trip around the world, he experienced other cultures and other religions. It raised the question, "If there are other religions, how do I know that my religion is true?" which is a question that many people struggle with today.

The second one was a tragic event. After he came back from the voyage, he married and had children. His daughter died early in life. I think that pushed him to say, "I can't believe in God." These two events go a long way in explaining his spiritual development.

So you can fit his theories into your faith?

I don't think it's wise to have science and faith very closely connected. I also don't think it's wise to have them not connected at all. But to have them at arm's length has become my approach. This does not mean I have answers to all problems. My faith motivates me to interpret Scripture as well as nature with utmost integrity. It is better from a Christian perspective to live with unresolved issues than to distort the interpretation of Scripture or of nature for the sake of harmony. After all Darwin does not have the last word about how living things develop and biblical scholars cannot agree on the interpretation of Genesis 1.

I know Darwin was hoping that his findings would be confirmed later – that more fossil evidence would appear –

There are hundreds of human fossils now and in his time there may have just been a few. But there is also a different kind of evidence now that is far stronger than that of fossils. For instance, one half of one chromosome in humans (number 12) has a gene sequence that is identical to one of a chimpanzee's chromosome. The other half of that human chromosome is identical to another chimpanzee chromosome. The chimp chromosomes seem to have fused in the human chromosome.

How could we explain that? Well, perhaps if there was a common ancestor, these two chromosomes fused at their tip. If that is true, there are some predictions you can make. Chromosomes have a special kind of structure at their tip which is very easily recognizable. If they have fused, you should see those two structures in the middle of the human chromosome. And scientists found it. That's what I call strong evidence.

Some people misunderstand this: it isn't saying that humans have apes as ancestors; it says there was a common ancestor – whatever kind of organism that was. And that's how you can explain the similarity. That's the kind of evidence that Darwin did not have. It's only been available recently.

Is that an example of macro evolution?

Well, that's a difficult question because macro evolution spans the development from the first single cell to us. I think that still is a very large step. When you compare these kinds of similarities on the level of chromosomes, you also have to ask, "How dissimilar are chimpanzees and humans?" Chimpanzees can't reflect on themselves. We have self-awareness, language and all these other things that chimpanzees don't have. That means that a simple comparison of genes doesn't tell the whole story. There must be other reasons for the difference. But certainly we have been created to be able to have a relationship with God. That's obvious.

You said a few minutes ago that you think it's wise to keep a certain distance between faith and science. Does modern science, which seems set on proving that God doesn't exist, bring those too close together?

I don't think so – Scientists who have a good feeling for what they're doing know that, strictly speaking, science cannot say anything about the existence of God or about religion. Scientists deal with things that have material causes and can be explained in material ways. But there are others who have a philosophical interest in a particular kind of worldview and they will take those theories and interpret them in that way. They hijack the cultural authority of science for their own purposes. In our culture, any trustworthy, legitimate knowledge is defended in the name of science – just look at TV commercials for pharmaceuticals.

So the advances of science have never threatened your faith?

No, never. One student commented that the single most important thing she learned from me was that I wasn't fearful of science. I was very happy with that comment, because I believe that if you're Christian, this is God's world. Why should I fear understanding that world?

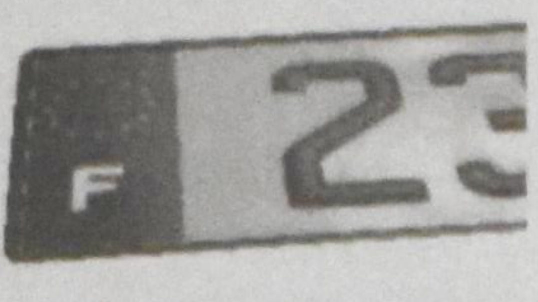
Recommended reading:

The Bible, Rocks and Time by Davis A. Young (IVP Academic, 2008).
Redeeming Science by Verne Poythress (Crossway Books, 2006).
Science and Faith: Friends or Foes by C. J. Collins. (Crossway Books, 2003).
Origins: A Reformed Look at Creation, Design, and Evolution by Deborah B. Haarsma and Loren D. Haarsma. (Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2007).

Church

Dutch Reformers find EU Mary quite contrary

LEEUWARDEN, the Netherlands (Ekklesia) – A group of Protestant Christians in the Netherlands is objecting to the emblem of the European Union (EU) being placed on car registration plates in their country, saying that the symbol conflicts with their religious convictions.



The National Foundation for the Preservation of the Political Reformed Principles states that the EU emblem – a circle of 12 golden stars on a blue background – symbolizes the veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, by the Roman Catholic Church.

"Most people don't think about it, but the EU symbol was thought up by a Roman Catholic in honour of Mary," P. H. Op 't Hof, chairperson of the Reformed foundation, told the *Nederlands Dagblad* recently. The newspaper reported that a court in the town of Leeuwarden had acknowledged that the issue concerns a matter of conscience.

This emboldened the Reformed group to repeat earlier requests to transport minister Camiel Eurlings, asking that the EU symbol be removed from the licence plates that have been in force since 2000. The government minister responded, however, by saying that he saw no reason to do so since it is European Union policy to have licence plates with the symbol.

The emblem and flag were first used by another European body, the Council of Europe, before being adopted by the EU in 1985. Observers agree that the symbol bears a striking similarity to the 12-star halo of the Virgin Mary often seen in Catholic art.

'Provisional solution'

In 1989, the Vatican newspaper *l'Osservatore Romano*, reported that the emblem's designer, Arsène Heitz, had described the source of his inspiration as a series of reported apparitions by the Virgin Mary in 19th-century Paris. The date on which the Council of Europe adopted the flag, Dec. 8, 1955, coincided with the Catholic Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Even so, a Dutch member of the European Parliament, Toine Manders, has rejected as "outrageous" the statements by the Reformed group. "These 12 stars were already around in the period of Greek mythology, in other words, long before Christianity,"' Manders stated on his website.

The Reformed foundation is a group of members of the Political Reformed Party (SGP), who judge the SGP to be insufficiently Calvinist. Founded in 1918, the SGP is the oldest political party in the Netherlands, and is known for its refusal to take part in any government Cabinet.

The Reformed foundation declared it was "disappointed" by the answer from the transport ministry. Its chairperson, Op 't Hof, however, has come up with a provisional solution to the problem. The group sells adhesive stickers with the Dutch lion symbol to cover the EU emblem. Officially this is not allowed, but Op 't Hof says he has never encountered any problems.

Nigerian broadcaster promotes godliness without religion

ABUJA, Nigeria (ENI) – Nigerian banker Erastus Akingbola has launched a radio station that seeks to propagate morals, ethics and godliness as the basic principles for nation-building in a country that forbids outright religious broadcasting.

"We want to use the power of the mass media to redress and reconstruct our national value system. We do not preach religion. We preach godliness, morals, ethics and sound value," said Akingbola, the chief executive officer of Intercontinental Bank. Akingbola is a Christian.

The station, Inspiration FM, is the newest addition to at least 15 others in the west African nation's economic capital. A 1992 law allowing private ownership has made it easier to obtain broadcast licences. There are now about 90 government and privately owned radio stations in the country.

Inspiration FM is the first Nigerian station to promote "godliness" as one of its objectives. Nigeria's broadcasting code forbids the establishment of stations for outright religious broadcasting to the country's 146 million people, of whom about 50 percent are Muslims and 40 percent Christians. Christian and Islamic broadcasts are usually classified as commercial programs, and individual broadcasts on television and radio stations require payment.

Akingbola laments what he called the debasement of the country's moral, socio-economic, political and even religious values. He says there is an urgent need to address the situation in Africa's most populous nation, which despite its oil wealth is beset by rampant corruption that holds back development.

"We communicate the right message that will assist our youth to achieve lofty ambitions and greatness through hard work, godliness and civic principles," says Akingbola. "This is our brand identity. At Inspiration FM we believe we can re-mold our battered social character, we believe we can reshape the future of our society for better," he explained. "We believe that Nigeria can be better, indeed we believe in Nigeria. This is our philosophy at Inspiration FM Radio."

Akingbola urged citizens organizations and political leaders to join the station in a campaign to reshape the country, commending recent efforts by the federal government to re-brand Nigeria.

On March 6, the Minister of Information and Communications inaugurated a 20-member committee on "rebranding" called the Nigeria National Image Project. It is advised by evangelist Bishop David Oyedepo, founder of the Living Faith Church Worldwide.

"What they are saying simply is that we cannot continue to put up with the image we exude abroad, the perception of ours as a country of sub-ethics," Akingbola explains. "All other arms and tiers of government should key into this initiative of the Federal Ministry of Information. We also enjoin corporate Nigeria to channel part of their corporate social responsibility resources towards development of the right social culture amongst our youth and among the general public."

Working 'with' is new wave

BELLFLOWER, Calif. (CRCNA) – A young Christian Reformed Church community developer has turned a storefront into a meeting place for young people in the gritty, Eucalyptus neighborhood in Bellflower, California. As Jay Van Groningen says, this is an example of someone doing ministry with and not just for people.

After spending countless hours canvassing the neighborhood to learn what people wanted to help make their lives better, Ryan VerWys and his wife, Rachel, learned that a chief concern on the part of parents was a safe environment for their children. He worked, for a time, as an intern for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

"Ryan is working in an area where there are 15,000 residents living in one block," says Van Groningen, team leader for U.S. ministries for the CRWRC.

Van Groningen helped to coordinate the recent "Power of With" conference that drew nearly 300 pastors, church members, community workers and others to the Chicago area to take a look at ways that churches are connecting with their communities. It is a model of church not bounded by four walls and a sanctuary.

At the conclusion of the conference, says Van Groningen, "we had a final wrap-up session in which I invited participants to make recommendations to various constituencies. We are sending the recommendations to the various agency heads (in the CRC) and inviting their response."

What *your* church can do

An additional group of people with whom they want to share their findings, and to whom they want to offer recommendations, are pastors. Following the conference, organizers are issuing a call to CRC pastors and churches to:

* Be intentional about meeting and knowing your neighbors face to face
* Connect yourself and your congregation with the community
* Don't be afraid to join with your neighbors and try something "with"
* Preach about the "power of with"
* Decentralize leadership and empower others to work with the community
* Preach the holistic gospel – a message that includes Christ's command to take his message into all of the world.

"This is a growing movement in the U.S. context," says Van Groningen. "We held the conference to learn from one another and hear about best practices."

The ministry that VerWys is doing in California is a prime example of this movement. Besides opening a storefront for youth, he and his wife have encouraged the young people to start a soccer league. The whole idea, says VerWys in a CRWRC report, is to help "the church and people to see the needs of our neighbors" and then to work with one another to address issues and to solve community problems.

VerWys now serves full-time as community development director for Kingdom Causes, a non-profit organization he helped to create in the low-income, diverse and crowded area of the city.

CRWRC has been working with Christian Reformed Home Missions on some of these community development initiatives, says Van Groningen. Overall, he says, CRWRC has worked in more than 130 neighborhoods "where life is sweeter today than it was before." Much of the work has been done in conjunction some 300 local churches over the last 15 years.

Bottom-up venture

"We are promoting the idea that the church needs to be involved in the life of its community," he says. "We see this as a regionally owned, bottom-up type of venture."

Rev. Stanley Vander Klay, interim pastor of a CRC congregation in the Whitinsville, Massachusetts, area, says he heard a group of people from Classis Atlantic Northeast, who attended the "Power of With" conference, speak at the most recent classis meeting about what they saw and learned.

"I believe in this work and am very enthusiastic about it," says Vander Klay. "It's good to get the churches to work together in their communities for social betterment. I'm hopeful that the different initiatives going on in various places will catch on in other places as well."

UK Liberal Dems: Faith-based schools shouldn't favor faith

Marian Van Til

LONDON – At their spring conference, a majority of Liberal Democrats asserted that Britain's existing faith-based schools should not be able to "discriminate" in terms of parents' or students' faith, and that new faith-based schools should not be allowed to select pupils on the ground of religion or belief.

The group Accord is happy about the Liberal Democrats' stand. Accord is an "inclusive schools coalition" which wants faith schools (as they are called in Britain) "to operate and to achieve universal standards of openness and inclusion for all schools in Britain."

That would mean, for example, that a Christian school may not require that its students or their parents adhere to Christian faith, principles or lifestyle. And it means that such a school would have to accept students who are Muslim or who practice Judaism, any other religion or "no religion," if they wished to attend.

Accord says it wants faith schools to "follow an objective, fair and balanced syllabus for education about religious and non-religious beliefs" – whether determined locally or by "any future national syllabus or curriculum for religious education." Faith schools "should provide their pupils with inclusive, inspiring and stimulating assemblies in place of compulsory acts of worship." Whether God, or whose god, might be invoked in such assemblies was not addressed.

Supporting the views of Accord and the Liberal Democrats were an Anglican clergyman and a Jewish rabbi.

Escape from the real world?

The Anglican, Rev. Jeremy Chadd, declared to the conference, "I continue to believe, from my own experience, that Christian schools with privileged and protected admission and employment policies not only damage and divide society, they also damage authentic Christian witness and principles, and ultimately are damaging to the church itself too."

He continued, "If we are to have publicly funded faith schools, then they must serve the whole community. They mustn't exist to prop up the faith community, nor to offer escape routes from a more diverse real world to those who already have all the advantages in life. Nor must they create division in society. They need, if they are to be true to Christianity (or, if I can presume to say it, to Judaism, to Islam, to any of the great faiths), to serve the whole community in humility and mutual respect."

Supporters of the new Liberal Democrat policy call it "a crucial development in the public debate about how to make faith schools better, and inclusion is an agenda around which everyone should be able to unite."

Supporters of schools such as the 44 run by the Christian School Trust, however, see the issue quite differently. Those schools exist because "in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a variety of Christian groups up and down the U.K. started to ask serious questions about the education that their children were receiving." But the kind of questions they asked were not those Accord asked. Instead, they wondered why Britain's Christian (Anglican) schools were no longer Christian. The result of that probing was that "a number of these groups took the radical step of starting schools where Christ was the centre of the educational process" – the kind of schools Accord defines as discriminatory.

Reformed seminary recognized by Canadian government

MONTREAL (FRTS) – Jean-Guy deBlois, administrator of Montreal's Farel Reformed Theological Seminary, says that this past year has been one of "amazing, wonderful and totally unexpected blessings." And the most significant of those is official recognition from the Canadian government granting Farel Seminary university status.

Rev. Martin Geleynse, founding pastor and the first dean of Farel, worked for many years toward this goal. The accreditation means, among other things, that students can now apply for government loans and bursaries.

When Geleynse heard the news of accreditation, he responded with "Praise the Lord! How will we ever be able to thank him appropriately?" DeBlois added, "Through the support of God's people, Farel is continuing today what was begun a third of a century ago."

Another blessing for Farel, says deBlois, was the move last September from a church to a three-storey building nearby. Originally in Quebec City, Farel Seminary took up residence in Montreal in 2001, when the demand for teaching grew. The new building, in the heart of the city, includes rooms for students, two offices for Christian non-profit organizations and Farel's own offices, classroom and library.

DeBlois says these developments have confirmed that the work of "teaching Reformed theology in Quebec ... has been worthwhile, and will continue to be so as long as the Lord continues to bless it."

Now in its thirty-first year, Farel Reformed Theological Seminary began with just two seminarians studying history and dogmatics. Farel is the only Reformed bilingual seminary in Canada, and trains pastors, evangelists, teachers and others interested in theology. Named after 16th century Reformer William Farel, the school is committed, with the backing of the Christian Reformed Church, to carrying on the Reformed tradition in Quebec.

Farel professor Jason Zuidema recently published a book called The Life and Thought of David Craig (1937-2001): Canadian Presbyterian Missionary. *The book recounts the life of David Craig, one of the founders of Farel seminary and an active missionary in Quebec, Switzerland and Nigeria.*

ICS faces quarter-million dollar shortfall

Marian Van Til, *with files from ICS/Jenny Krabbe*

TORONTO – For six months North Americans and people worldwide have been hearing about the economic downturn. Behind the reported percentages, pie charts and forecasts, Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) wants to remind Christians that there are real people, important ministries and valuable kingdom building at risk.

The ICS itself is one of those ministries. More than $250,000 in anticipated revenue for the current fiscal year, ending June 30, has not been received. The institution has begun a broad financial appeal in the hope that many who value its work and impact will support the school with a gift – and with their prayers.

ICS has calculated that a gift of $1000 from each of the Canadian churches of the Christian Reformed Church (its main body of supporters), or 1000 gifts of $250 from individuals will bring the Institute through to the end of June.

Shrinking next year's budget too

The ICS board has also directed the school to find a way to operate with a budget of $1 million for the 2009-10 fiscal year, which begins July 1. The new budget represents a marked change from ICS's budgets over the past number of years, which have been some $700,000 higher than that.

Now 40 years old, ICS's goal has not changed over the years, it says. Founded by Reformed Christians as Canada's only Christian post-graduate academic institution, ICS aims to "develop and critique society-shaping ideas in academic circles and among Christian culture-shapers." It tries to do that from a perspective "self-consciously aligned to the Scriptures as they are understood and followed among people of faith." The Institute sums that up as being "in the business of forming minds and engaging culture."

Many ICS graduates go on to teach in colleges and universities and in that role "they give voice to a biblical perspective," says the Institute. Others take up leadership positions in numerous other kinds of institutions in Canada, the U.S. and various other countries.

Dordt's Canadian hockey coach wins 'Coach of the Year'

Marian Van Til

SIOUX CENTER, Iowa – Dordt College Blades hockey coach Nate van Niejenhuis has been named the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) Division III Coach of the Year. Van Niejnehuis, 30, has been head coach of the Blades for four years, having been promoted from assistant coach. He himself attended Dordt as a student, graduating at the end of 2002.

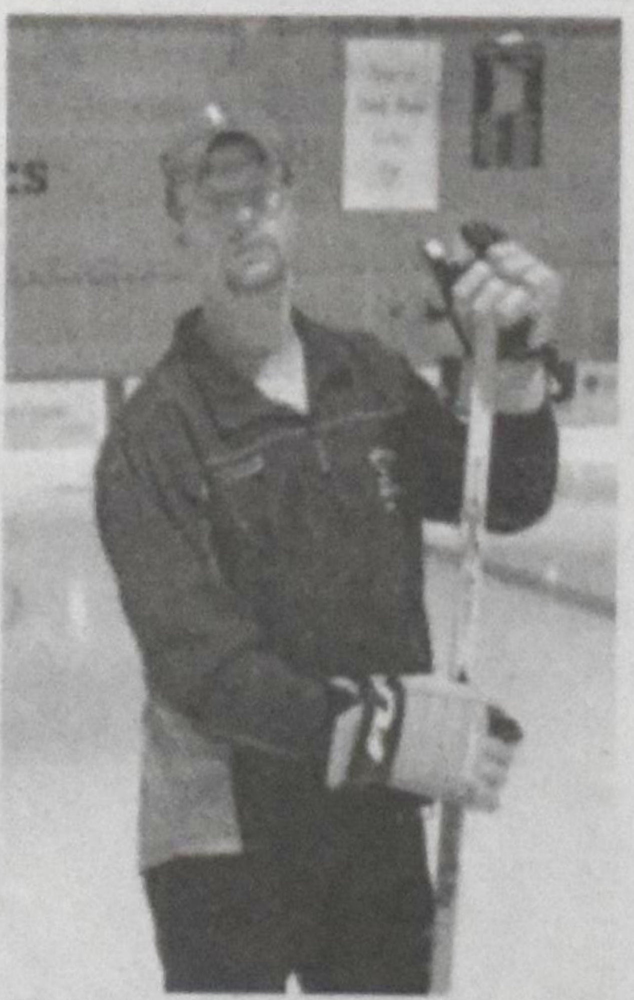


Photo: Jane Versteegen/Dordt College

Van Niejenhuis led the Dordt Blades to the ACHA Division III National Tournament two years in a row, with seasons of 20-plus wins. The 2007-2008 Blades team eventually finished 13th at the U.S. National Tournament in Rochester, Minnesota, with a 2-2 record there.

There are 120-130 collegiate teams at Dordt's level, including Calvin College (Grand Rapids, Mich.) and Hope College (Holland, Mich.), van Niejenhuis told *CC.* Those teams are divided into four regions, with Dordt being in the Pacific Coast region. All coaches select a Coach of the Year for their region, then the four regional co-ordinators and the divisional commissioner select the overall Coach of the Year.

"I'm honored," said van Niejenhuis, "It *is* an honor." But he added quickly, "I have very, very good hockey players, and good assistant coaches too."

One example is team member Jared Rempel, a senior from Chilliwack, B.C., who earned ACHA Division III First-Team All-American honors for the second year in a row. He scored 12 goals and had 31 assists in play leading to the national tournament. Rempel also won All-Region First-Team honors for his play this season. Five other van Niejenhuis team members were awarded honors for excellent play.

Nathan Van Niejenhuis was born in Brantford, Ontario, and grew up in four communities in Ontario and Alberta where his father, Cecil, pastored Christian Reformed congregations. He stayed in Sioux Center after college and married a Sioux Center native. Nathan and Shawna van Niejenhuis have two sons, aged 3 and 1.

Besides coaching, van Niejenhuis is the facilities director for the All Seasons Center, an indoor-outdoor aquatic and ice center shared jointly by the town of Sioux Center and Dordt College.

Memoirs

Stories of Occupation and Resistance (VI)

As experienced by Machiel Edelman (codename Dolf) and narrated by his daughter Dineke Poelman.

An angel in the night

After his rescue from the hospital by the KP special resistance, Chiel Edelman (Dolf) became a much feared and hunted criminal. For more than a year he was unable to show himself in his birthplace, Bodegraven. He wandered from hiding place to hiding place. Even his fiancée Diny, who was also the daughter of his employer, bookseller Karssen, became known as "the fiancée of ..." and was forced to go into hiding.

After "Mad Tuesday" Dolf became more daring in public. With fake bicycle permits he crisscrossed the country.

A daring visit

On Sunday, April 29, 1945, grounded by a severe rainstorm, Dolf could no longer resist the temptation to visit his birthplace and his family. After all, the war was nearly over. The *moffen* (Germans) had more important things to do than to catch "criminals." They should be occupying themselves with their own future.

The Karssen family was very surprised when they returned home from church to find their future son- and brother-in-law Dolf there together with a number of his friends. Cor Karssen immediately took off to the attic to listen to the *Radio Oranje* (Radio Orange) news broadcast on his forbidden crystal radio. To his great joy he heard that Hitler had committed suicide in his bunker in Berlin that day. He walked back down in a cheerful and happy mood.

His joy quickly turned into panic. It appeared that the SS had forced their way into the house. These SS men were fanatics. Knowing their days were numbered made them more irritable and treacherous than ever. All those in the house were searched

Canadians escort German prisoners out of Holland.

and questioned. Some of them were able to make up a story, but when quantities of contraband material were found in Cor Karssen's home, he was ordered to come along. Dolf's ID, which was at this time in the name of van Laer from Zeist, was not deemed believable, and he too was ordered to go with the SS.

They were thrown into a police cell in Bodegraven on Willem de Zwijgerstraat. The guard policeman, Groenendijk, was a "good Dutchman" (sympathetic to the resistance movement) and had served the resistance on many occasions. He knew Dolf well and also knew what he had experienced in the last number of years. A thorough interrogation, with a chance that the Germans would learn more, could be a death warrant to many people.

When Groenendijk was asked if he knew these men, he naturally had to say that he knew Karssen as bookseller in Bodegraven. The other, van Laer, he did not know. He was, presumably, a friend of Karssen's.

Imprisoned

In the cell were also three SS men who were being punished for disciplinary offences. They were made responsible for these "damned Dutchmen." How damned one of them, namely van Laer, really was, they fortunately did not know yet. Cor was quickly transferred out to Gouda for further interrogation.

As soon as Groenendijk had the opportunity, he warned the Resistance. The situation was very critical, the more so because the SS had quickly been informed about Dolf's true identity. Groenendijk learned that on Wednesday, May 3 the two suspects (Cor and Dolf) would be publicly hanged or shot to death in the marketplace.

The Resistance workers looked for opportunities to free the two prisoners, but it was difficult. Many soldiers were stationed around the police cell, making an armed assault impossible. The only way that Dolf could be freed was through a ruse. Groenendijk and Jaap Heidema, who was in hiding, had to carry out the plan, and in homes around the police station other residents of Bodegraven would be hiding behind the curtains, armed with loaded sten guns, to intervene if necessary.

Groenendijk, fortunately, was still trusted by the Germans, and he would have to take advantage of that. First of all, he had to try to get the keys to the cell door and gate in the hallway.

One last adventure

"The prisoners are going to die in their own filth if they can't go to the bathroom," Groenendijk said to the *Ortskommandant* (commander), "and I'm willing to take them there armed."

"Okay, you'll get the keys," replied the commander, "but that makes you responsible for the prisoners." That's exactly how Groenendijk felt, albeit his was a different kind of responsibility.

On the evening of Tuesday, May 2, the Germans hung around in the police station until after eleven. Then it became quiet. Jaap Heidema took up his post, and Groenendijk made an inspection round of the grounds. He heard the prisoners call out that they urgently needed to go to the bathroom and opened the gate and the cell door. In an orderly manner he led the prisoners one at a time to the bathroom, first the SS soldiers and then Dolf. The third SS soldier became suspicious and remained in the doorway waiting for Dolf to return. Groenendijk gave him a nasty blow so that he fell back, unconscious, into the cell. Then he quickly closed the door and ran off to Boskoop where he waited for the Liberation. His wife and children had already gone into hiding, as a precaution.

Jaap Heidema took Dolf out of the police station and into the polder. Unfortunately, Dolf was wearing a white shirt. That color was much too visible. When they saw a cyclist approaching from a distance, and suspected that he might be a German, they dove into the ditch and waited, neck deep in the mud, until the danger had passed.

Fortunately they had to remain in hiding for only three days (first with barber van den Berg on the Noordstraat, and then with the Vergeer's in Rijswijk).

On Friday, May 5th, The Netherlands was liberated.

Cor Karssen, the bookseller, was also freed by the KP special resistance (*Knokploeg*) from his cell in Gouda.

On that Friday the bookstore opened, the flag was unfurled, and all the patriotic and festive orange and red/white/blue articles, recovered from their secret hiding places in the attic, promptly found their way across the counter.

This is the final installment of Dolf's amazing story. Thank you to Machiel Edelman and Dineke Poelman for sharing it with us.

A crowd waves flags following the liberation of Breda by Polish troops, November 2, 1944

Civilians greet Canadian troops Apr. 1945, Rijssen, Netherlands

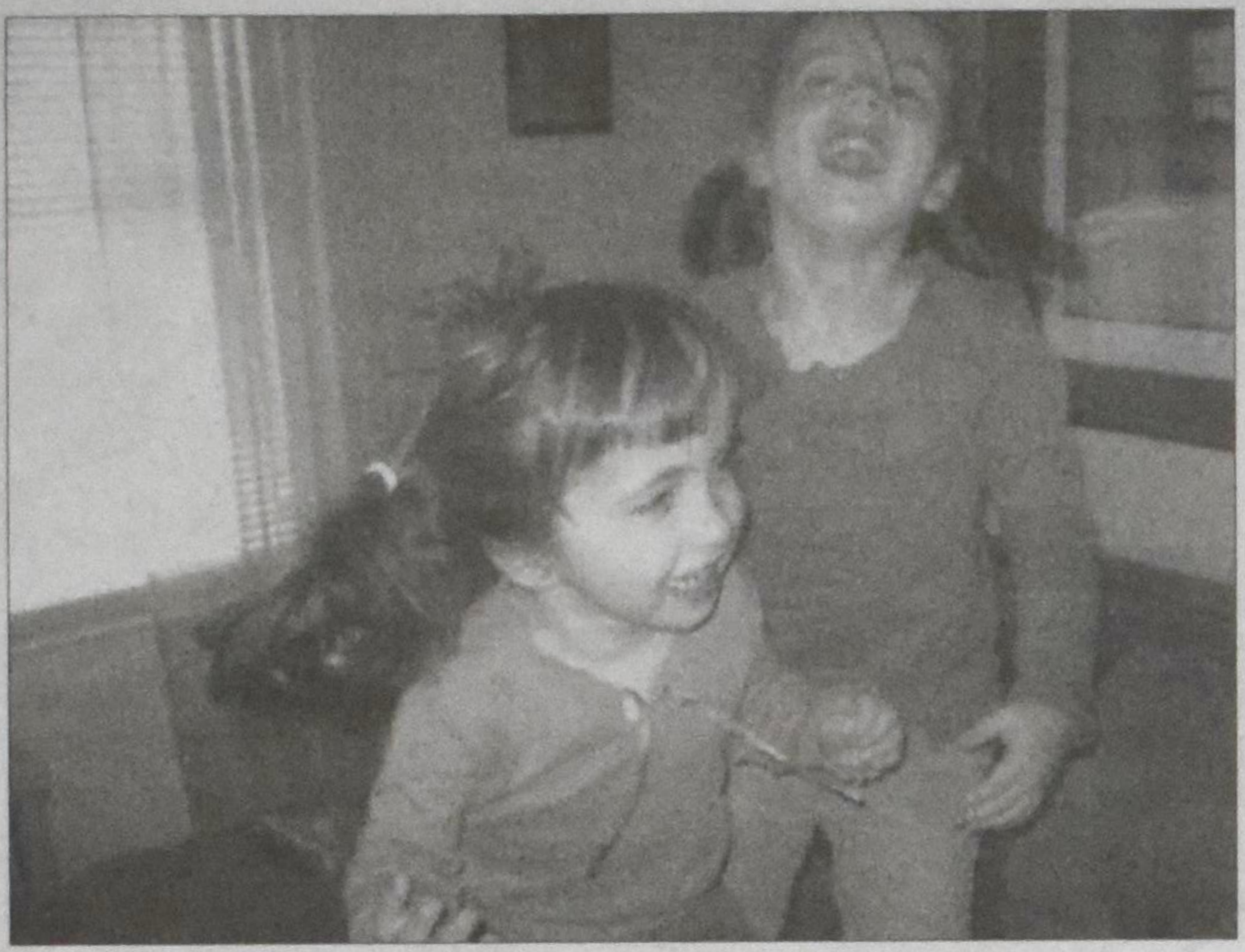
Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

Bits of Bread

As a young girl, I spent nearly as much time at the neighbours' house as I did at home. The Dewars lived across the street from us and had two daughters, one of whom was my age.

Even though we grew up in the same neighborhood, in some ways Kathy and I lived worlds apart. My parents were immigrants, focused largely on hard work and orderly living. They taught me to be respectful and disciplined. Things at Kathy's house were more relaxed. But probably the biggest difference was that her parents were Christians and mine – though loving, decent folks – were not believers.



Mrs. Dewar was at home, and my mother worked full time, so we naturally hung out there more often. We rode our tricycles with reckless abandon through their wide-open basement, ran through the lawn sprinklers on warm days and were allowed to build forts from old boxes and blankets, even in the living room.

Sometimes we got a little crazy and played games such as "jump-up-and-down-on-the-bed-with-the-lights-out." We laughed hysterically, getting wilder and wilder until inevitably, one of us got hurt or the bed collapsed, or both. At that point Mr. Dewar would come in, fix the bed and gently scold us before returning to his newspaper. Had the same thing happened at our house, my friend would have been promptly sent home and my bottom would have felt the repercussions. Then my father would have fixed the bed.

A precious example

A lover of books, Mrs. Dewar often read to us in the middle of the day – classic children's literature, Dr. Seuss and, frequently, Bible stories. The Dewars took me to church with them every Sunday, and since Mrs. Dewar led CGIT (the United Church equivalent to GEMS), I attended that regularly as well.

One of the things I loved about the Dewars was their willingness to invite me to supper. My parents weren't always keen on the idea, fearing that I would wear out my welcome. But we asked so many times that they usually gave in at least once a week.

No matter how often I showed up at their table, I was always treated as an honoured guest. Mr. Dewar began each meal with prayer. When he gave thanks for "friends and neighbours," I knew he was talking about me. Then, as children, we responded with, "God is great; God is good; let us thank him for our food." And I would have to work at not making *food* rhyme with *good*.

Instead of butter, they ate margarine (a delicacy in my opinion), there wasn't a Brussels sprout in sight, but plenty of canned corn (my favourite) and you didn't have to empty your plate to qualify for dessert (itself a rarity at our house). After supper we were free to run and play, whereas at home my brother and I had dish duty.

Kathy and I drifted apart when we reached our teens. But there's no denying the happy memories from their household and the spiritual impact the family had on me.

Crumbs of grace

In some ways I feel like the Canaanite woman who approached Jesus for a miracle. His initial response was that he had come for the children of Israel, and it wasn't right to "take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

The woman persisted, responding with, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from the master's table." Jesus commended her faith and granted her request.

Although the Dewars lived their Christianity first and foremost for their own daughters to see, they included me at their table, and I was blessed by the "crumbs" of grace that overflowed.

As Easter approaches I anticipate an even more gracious dinner invitation. The darkness of Christ's crucifixion and burial, contrasted with the brilliant victory of Sunday morning lends vivid significance to Communion on Good Friday.

I will sit at the Lord's Table, painfully aware that I have no virtue of my own to put me on the guest list, not even a physical lineage to trace me back to Abraham. But there, in those bits of bread and thimbles of wine, lies the very reason I'm allowed to stay for supper at God's house. Along with my brothers and sisters in Christ, I will commemorate the Savior's accomplishment and look forward to the time when he returns to take us all home with him. After that, every meal will be the Lord's Supper. Happy Easter!

Heidi VanderSlikke (vanderslikke@ everus.ca) lives in Harriston, Ont.

There is more to Good Friday than meets the eye

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus, who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.
They all answered: "Crucify him!"
Matthew 27:22

Lou DeVries

Many descriptions we read and hear about Jesus' suffering focus on the physical part of his suffering; undeniably scourging and crucifying were extremely painful. In most cases death was agonizingly slow. Some say that Jesus suffered so much more than the other two men who were crucified at the same time because he was innocent.

Yes, Jesus was innocent; in our eyes this was a political murder. It was not Jesus, though, who was hanging there; it was you and I. He suffered the penalty we were supposed to suffer. But why did he have to die such a gruesome death?

Separation pains

John Calvin, in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, gives us the reason. He says, "The very form of the death embodies a striking truth. The cross was cursed not only in the opinion of men, but by the enactment of the Divine Law. Hence Christ, while suspended on it, subjects himself to the curse, and thus it behooved to be done, in order that the whole curse, which on account of our iniquities awaited us, or rather lay upon us, might be taken from us by being transferred to him."

But in addition to this physical suffering another suffering did take place. The Bible gives a few examples of this suffering. It takes place after an individual has physically died and the soul and the body are separated from each other.

One example is the parable Jesus told about a rich man and Lazarus. In Luke 16: 24, the rich man states: "I am in agony in this fire." Another example is in the explanation of the parable of the weeds (Matthew 13: 42): "They (the angels) will throw them (everything that causes sin and all who do evil) into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth". Why were they, although they were dead, in agony and were weeping and gnashing their teeth?

Because, in addition to having died physically, they had been rejected by God.

"He descended into Hell"

This rejection, this forsakenness, this everlasting death is the punishment we would have received in addition to our physical death if Jesus had not substituted for you and me. This punishment, this rejection, this God forsakenness, is being in hell.

Jesus did not suffer only the physical punishment; he also experienced those pains of hell. He descended into hell, the place of ultimate God-forsakenness.

One of the things that Jesus spoke when on the cross was, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Calvin, in dealing with the statement in the Apostles Creed where it says, "He descended into hell," wrote that "if Christ had died only a bodily death, it would have been ineffectual. No – it was expedient at the same time for him to undergo the severity of God's vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his judgment. For this reason he must also grapple hand to hand with the armies of hell and the dread of everlasting death." In the same section he says that "not only was the body of Christ given up as the price of redemption, but that there was a greater and more excellent price – that he bore in his soul the tortures of condemned and ruined man." Later he wrote, "And surely, unless his soul shared in the punishment, he would have been the Redeemer of bodies alone."

What does it mean?

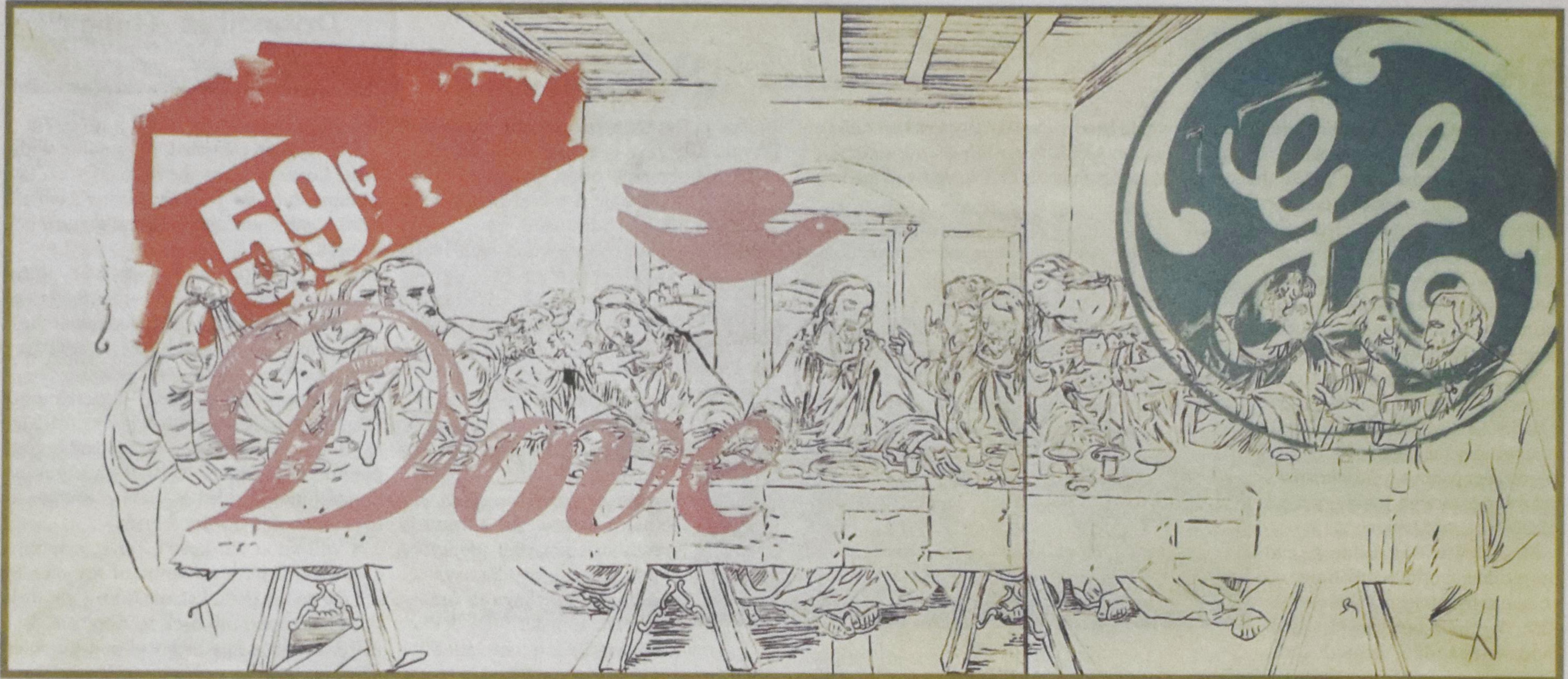
There are different opinions of when and for how long this forsakenness took place, but that it did take place is indisputable.

God accepted Jesus' suffering and rejection as a substitution for our punishment and, after the payment had been made, raised him from the dead.

In time he will raise us also. Those who accept the fact that Jesus was our substitute are raised to eternal life, not only physically but also to a restored relationship with God. Those who reject Jesus' offer are also raised physically, but to eternal rejection.

There are two reasons why the awareness of Jesus's soul suffering is important. First of all, it shows us how great a calamity we have escaped by accepting the fact that this was done for us, and secondly, it shows how great a condemnation is waiting for those who reject this rescue.

Lou DeVries (loudevries@shaw.ca) lives in Abbotsford B.C



Andy Warhol, The Last Supper (Dove), *1986. Synthetic polymer paint on canvas. 119" x 263"*

The DaVinci Barcode

Chris Cuthill

In a time before Leonardo's masterpiece *The Last Supper* was insidiously deconstructed by the grand conspiracies of Dan Brown it was a favourite subject for kitsch reproductions. Like *Gioconda's* smile, *L'Ultima Cena* has endured many an indignity over the years. It has been reproduced in tapestry and needlework kits, lacquered-on and laser-cut from plywood, painted on black velvet and illuminated with black light. You can carry it on your lunch box, reconstruct it as a jigsaw puzzle and replicate it in paint-by-number. It has been carved from butter and chocolate, assembled from spools of thread and Legos and has been recast in sand, salt and Simpson's characters. With each reproduction, *The Last Supper* was lifted out of the world of "high art" to become an image so instantly familiar, so deeply inscribed in our cultural imagination, that it took on a new life as a logo or emblem for both Christianity and art quite independent of its existence as a painting in Milan.

Worhol's final masterpiece

In the final year of his life (1986-1987), the American artist Andy Warhol offered his own unique dialogue with Leonardo. In the early eighties Warhol began making works derived from other major artists including Raphael, Botticelli, De Chirico, and Munch. With the *Last Supper*, Warhol found his last grand inspiration, a sustained re-imagining of Leonardo's masterpiece. The impetus for the project was a proposal for an exhibition to be held in the Credito-Valtellinese, a Milanese bank located directly across the street from the Church of Santa Maria della Grazie where Leonardo's original dilapidated fresco is housed. Warhol considered this project central to his life and work, and created far more work than the commission and the available space demanded. In the end, his series grew to encompass more than 100 paintings, a body of work that is considered by many critics to constitute his most important work. Indeed, it could be argued that the epic extent of the monumental series indicates an almost obsessive investment in the subject.

Mixing the sacred and secular with reckless abandon, Warhol combined the language of corporate logo with religious kitsch. In *The Last Supper (Dove),* for example, Warhol superimposes a price tag and the logos for General Electric and Dove soap over a line drawing taken from a schematic outline drawing of the original he found in a children's coloring book. As with the other works in the series, Warhol's "Last Supper" series is based on inexpensive secondary reproductions of the famous image and not on the image itself.

Andy Warhol

One of the most influential artists of the twentieth century, Andy Warhol left an indelible mark on the history of modern art and culture through his imagery and personal style. Best known for his multiple silkscreen representations of celebrities and product labels, Warhol embraced the debased ephemera of contemporary mass culture and raised them from the level of consumption to contemplation. By reiterating images derived from popular culture through hands-off techniques and mechanized repetition that directly recalled their origins in standardized mass reproduction, Warhol positioned himself as both a critic and a celebrant of mass culture. A self-described "deeply superficial" person, Warhol embraced American popular culture with deadpan neutrality. In public, Warhol appeared indifferent to issues of meaning, value or taste. His persona of postmodern insouciance came to epitomize the sex, drugs and rock-and-roll indulgence of the eighties' Soho club scene.

But in private, Warhol's aesthetic strategy of indifference broke down. Although it is not widely known, Warhol was raised and remained a devout Christian his entire life. Raised in a Byzantine Rite Catholic community in Pittsburgh, Warhol continued to attend mass almost daily, regularly helped to feed the homeless at an Episcopal Church on the Upper East Side, and even had a private audience with Pope John Paul II in 1980. This is a side of himself that Warhol kept modestly secret, hidden from the flashbulbs and paparazzi.

A contradiction

It is difficult to match this description of a quietly pious Andy Warhol with the façade of celebrity and voyeurism he worked so hard to create. I am not sure what to make of this disconnect. Part of me is deeply saddened that he was never able to fully integrate his faith and artistry. But part of me understands Warhol's discomfort at bringing his faith into the hot focus of the spotlight. Warhol's art not only cut through the divide between high and low art, but the pretensions of quasi-spiritual artwork that offered secular experiences of mystery, transcendence and beauty. For Warhol, art offered no answers – it could only reflect the emptiness of a culture fixated on consumption. His faith was the one thing that was real to him. Before God he could offer himself up, with all of his sins, contradictions and eccentricities, to the mystery of grace. Before God he could be authentic.

Last Supper (Dove)

In *Last Supper (Dove)* Warhol treats Christ and the apostles as elements in a collage of postmodern iconography. Like the almost religious jingoism of GE (We bring good things to life!) and Dove's "beauty" bar, Leonardo's ubiquitous painting is a shortcut to a cheapened and nostalgic view of Christianity. Warhol's first exposure to art was through looking at painted icons in church as a boy – an influence that would constantly reemerge in his "Pop Saint" icons of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley and John Wayne. In these final works, Warhol overtly explores the intersection between the worlds of art, commerce and religion. On one level, his Last Supper paintings may be interpreted as a reminder that we live in a culture where everything is on sale, including religion. Yet the price tag also suggests that real grace, while free, is never cheap.

Chris Cuthill (ccuthil@redeemer.ca) is an art historian and theorist and the Head of the Art Department at Redeemer University College

Easter 1945

Berta Hosmar

Today we don't find it unusual in our churches when we see children celebrate Communion, but we all know that several years ago there was much debate and controversy when this subject was discussed in our denomination.

When I grew up in my native Holland we had never even heard about it. Sure, children also loved the Lord, just like adults, but even for adults, "going to the Lord's supper" as it was called, was never taken lightly. It was celebrated every three months, and on the Sunday before we had "preparation sermons" and were warned that confessing members would really have to examine themselves to see if there were no unconfessed sins in their lives.

Children, with their childlike faith can often put us adults to shame, and I can remember that once, when I was a child, I also would have been ready to "eat the bread and drink the cup" if it had been allowed, just so I could show my gratitude and thankfulness for deliverance of fear and danger.

An uncertain time

It was 1945, and spring was in the air. The grass was green, the daffodils were blooming, birds were singing and nature was rejoicing, but our hearts were heavy with fear.

We knew it could not be much longer before the Second World War would be over, for some parts of Holland had already been liberated, but we had just survived yet another bombardment. This time more than a hundred civilians had been killed, among them some of our friends and the student who was hiding from the Germans and was supposedly my father's hired hand. He had lived with us for some time and had ventured outside just a little too soon. Our town was often the target of the Allied Forces, for an important railway and bridge ran right through it, and by bombing those frequently, the English Spitfires hoped to block the retreat of the enemy. But sometimes those bombs landed on homes and businesses.

Our nerves were shot, and every time we heard planes overhead we fled to the shelter in our backyard. Then one morning a few German soldiers, guns pointed at my dad, told us that we had 24 hours to leave our farmhouse, for some 50 soldiers needed a place to sleep. My dad biked to a nearby village, some 10 km. away, where a few second cousins of my mother lived on a farm and asked if they could put up a set of parents with seven children until the war was over.

The next day, we arrived with our horse and wagon, some clothes and mattresses and blankets. We had come to a different world. No air raids here, no falling bombs, just peacefulness all around us. Sure, there were many signs of the war here as well, but it was no comparison to what we had left behind.

Sickness in the house

Children are resilient. We had seen terrible things in our hometown, things children should not have to see and experience, just like today when children are the victims of horrible happenings in countries that are at war or where the population has been devastated by Aids or hunger.

We were finally starting to relax, however, and we soaked up the kindness of our hosts. We had joined a rather different family. No married couple here, but two elderly brothers and sisters ran the farm. One sister was bedridden, and to make sure she was still part of the family, her bedroom door, which was right beside the large farm kitchen, had been taken off. The bedroom was narrow and now boasted two single beds, one occupied by "Tante", as we called mom's cousin, and one now occupied by our thirteen-year-old brother, much to his dismay.

It so happened that he had a bad fall and had bumped his head, and the old country doctor told my parents that he probably had a slight concussion and needed complete bedrest for at least a week. "If you don't rest, my boy," he told brother Henk, "you may suffer from headaches for the rest of your life. You should not read, either, and don't get up to go to the outhouse; use a bedpan."

After the doctor left and when Tante dozed, our brother finally had a chance to vent his anger. "She snores!" he hissed when my mother brought him a snack, "and no way I am going to use that bedpan!"

A troublesome patient

We had to take turns keeping him amused. We read him stories, but he did not seem to be sick at all, nor was he thankful that we took the time to entertain him, so we soon lost our sympathy and teased him mercilessly.

We told him we had to sleep in the barn where the rooster woke us up at 4 a.m. and the cows wanted to be milked at 6 a.m. and wasn't he lucky that he had such a nice bed right beside Tante?

The crisis came when the next day an elderly man dressed in a black suit, white shirt and dark tie came over on his bike to visit Tante.

It turned out that he was an elder in her church. He took a chair between the two beds, and after a lengthy discussion with Tante about her various ailments he turned to our restless and impatient brother.

"And aren't you blessed and thankful my boy that, now that you have been thrown on this sickbed, you have such a nice room to sleep in so you can recover from your disease?"

The answer must have shocked the good man. "No, I'm not, I'm not sick! I want to get up!" was the belligerent reply. We were listening in the kitchen and had trouble keeping our snickering under control.

The elder tried again. "Do your sins bother you?" he wanted to know, but again it proved to be the wrong question.

"No, not right now, I just want to get out of bed," Henk snarled, and again we tried to suppress our giggles. But our brother's patience had worn out, and after the elder left and he had received a scolding from his parents, even my mother realized that it was no use trying to tame him and that he might as well get up if he promised to take it easy.

Something to celebrate

After a few days the healing influence of these quiet days had an effect on us. We weren't so jumpy anymore, and every day we prayed fervently that God would end this war.

And then, one bright morning, a neighbour came running to tell us that Canadian tanks were rolling into the village. We hugged each other and danced for joy. No more bombs, no more death by violence, no more burning homes and screaming people! It was a miracle!

That same week we celebrated Good Friday and Easter Sunday. On Good Friday the mood in church was subdued.

The psalms that were picked were sung slowly and softly, accompanied by the pipe organ.

At home we quickly turned the pages of the children's bible where Jesus hung on the cross. We knew he had died for our sins, but the pictures frightened us.

But then came Easter Sunday. And this time we could also celebrate the liberation in this part of the country. My heart was bursting with gratitude. We had seen so much death all around, but that day we knew that Jesus lived again after three days in the grave. When communion was served, I all of a sudden knew that, when I grew up, I would also want to go to the front of the church underneath the pulpit, where the bread and wine was being served. True, looking back, I was not so very much aware of my sins and my need to be forgiven, and I felt the same as my brother did a few days ago. But I just knew that I did not have to be afraid anymore and that Jesus loved even me. These feelings were sufficient for a child my age.

After the final blessing, the organist pulled out all the stops and we remained standing in our pews and spontaneously joined his jubilant finale: "A shout rings out, a joyful voice, Jerusalem arise, rejoice!"

We had learned this hymn in our Christian school, but it was never sung in our church on a Sunday, for our denomination stuck with the singing of psalms during the service.

But today we were celebrating, and no solemn consistory could, and would, dampen our joy! It was Easter!

Dame, at our door

Drowned, and among our shoals,
Remember us in the roads, the
heaven-haven of the Reward:
Our King back, oh, upon English
souls!
Let him easter in us, be a dayspring
to the dimness of us, be a crimson-
cresseted east,
More brightening her, rare-dear
Britain, as his reign rolls,
Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-
priest,
Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our
thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.

(the final stanza of Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem, "The Wreck of the Deutschland")

Opinions

Christ @ Culture
Lloyd Rang

The Gospel according to Battlestar Galactica

When I was a kid, I used to love visiting my friend, Curtis. His family didn't attend evening service, which meant that on Sunday nights, at his place, I could watch "Battlestar Galactica," which I thought was the coolest show on television.

Of course, what seemed pretty cool in 1977 seems pretty cheesy now. The show's hammy acting, recycled special effects and weird fusion of Mormonism and classical mythology did not stand the test of time as well as, say, *Star Wars* did. On the other hand, where *Star Wars* was eye candy, "Battlestar Galactica" at least tried to be gritty and ask meaningful and spiritual questions, even if it didn't always succeed. And for that, I have always had a soft spot for the show.

When the series was re-imagined in 2004, my chief worry was that it would abandon the spiritual subtext. I had watched "Babylon 5," and had been impressed with that show's willingness to take religion seriously, and hoped the new "Battlestar" would join the long list of science fiction shows – from the original "Star Trek" to "LOST" – in exploring issues of faith.

I was not disappointed.

Space for spirituality

Over its four-season run, writer-director Ronald D. Moore crafted a show that explored contemporary questions of faith, ethics, politics and technology – all set against a backdrop of stars.

As with the original series, the show begins when humanity, living in a distant part of the galaxy, is nearly annihilated by a race of robots called "cylons." The cylons had been created by humans, but they rebelled, and after decades of peace, they return and destroy their former masters. A few thousand people escape, led by humanity's one remaining warship – a kind of space-aircraft carrier called a battlestar. The humans escape and attempt to find a new home, one only mentioned in their ancient scriptures. A place called "earth."

The interesting part of the new version – for me at least – is the spiritual dimension. The humans are polytheists, and worship gods and goddesses modeled after the ancient Greek gods and symbolized by tiny statues. The cylons, on the other hand, worship a single, nameless and invisible God, whom they believe has a divine plan for all things. Humans die and never see an afterlife. Cylons die and are resurrected, to continue carrying out their plans.

The implication, of course, is that God is punishing humanity, Old Testament style, in order to cleanse it of sin and corruption. And, make no mistake, these humans are corrupt, and decadent and unlovable. At one point, their leader, Commander Adama, asks aloud:

"Why are we as a people worth saving? We still commit murder because of greed and spite, jealousy, and we still visit all of our sins upon our children. We refuse to accept the responsibility for anything that we've done, like we did with the Cylons. We decided to play God, create life. And when that life turned against us, we comforted ourselves in the knowledge that it really wasn't our fault, not really. You cannot play God then wash your hands of the things that you've created. Sooner or later, the day comes when you can't hide from the things that you've done anymore."

I cannot recall another television series in recent history that has so perfectly captured the notion of total depravity, nor – especially in the show's final episode back in March – has one so eloquently articulated a vision of divine grace.

Truth and fiction

Throughout the series' four-year run we see an atheist become a spiritual leader. Several major characters lay down their lives to save others. One main character is sacrificed. Others give into despair and loneliness, succumb to temptation or weakness, or make and break solemn vows. In other words, the series also captures our fallen condition perfectly – and often heart-breakingly.

Some viewers will have flipped past the show, perhaps turned off by the sight of robots, or spaceships. People who dismiss the show because of the Sci Fi genre are missing out. I have yet to see any of the "CSI" franchise, or "House" or "Grey's Anatomy" feature characters with deeply held belief systems, or consistently challenge viewers to think in spiritual terms. "Battlestar Galactica" has stood in a class by itself from the outset – which is unfortunate.

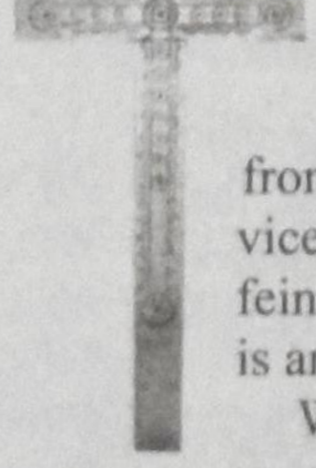
It's ironic that "science fiction" is the best place to see spiritual truths on television. And it's sad that something so central to people's daily lives here on earth can only be given serious treatment in a fantasy setting. However, it has been that way since I was a kid, and will probably continue to be that way in the future.

Or, to put it in the words of the series: "What has happened before will happen again."

Lloyd Rang (lloyd.rang@rogers.com) is a member of Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville Ontario. His first published piece of writing was a short story in Calvinist Contact *when he was 12 years old.*

The gods are crazy

The Liberal Artist
Brian Dijkema



Lent is an appropriate time for sombre reflection. Many of us take the time to examine our own sins and corruption, often with the aid of giving up or abstaining from some good thing (or small vice, as is the case for many caffeine or chocolate addicts). This is an important and good thing.

While not taking anything away from the importance of such practices, there's something about the cosmic nature of Easter that necessitates an extension of self examination to a reflection on the sin and corruption of the world at large; our universal need for the grace of Christ.

And surveying the despair and groaning around the globe – from our own economic schizophrenia to the slaughter of innocents in Sudan, to the starvation and cholera in Zimbabwe to the stifling of civic life under the hands of dictators worldwide – one can't help but ask if we've all gone stark raving mad.

I suppose this madness has afflicted us for some time. Take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, circa 580 B.C., who while walking along the roof of his prime real estate surveyed his kingdom and with god-like pride asked "is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" This statement initiated seven years of insanity, complete with matted hair and long dirty finger nails.

This particular brand of madness seems to inflict those with great power. Think of that quintessential madman, Hitler, obsessed with creating a race of gods. Or, perhaps, of Stalin, who oversaw the death of countless millions and who asked "how many legions has the pope?" Even today, dictators such as Robert Mugabe and Fidel Castro continue to believe that no authority but their own is worthy of their attention while people starve or are stifled under their rule. If madness is the utter lack of concern for anything but the seeing of your will be done and your desires fulfilled, then surely these men are insane.

The madness of such men – and more often than not it is men – is unique, however, only by degree and by the extent to which their wills can be imposed directly upon those suffering within the borders of their country. How often do we, individually and as a culture, adopt a kinder, gentler version of the same type of madness? Is not "my will be done" the answer to the first question of the catechism for our times?

I'd say it is, and it is guaranteed to drive you mad, just as it drove its most well-known prophet, Nietzche, mad. We lowercase-g gods, who are made "a little lower than the heavenly beings," are crazy.

This lent, I would encourage us all to reflect deeply into our own hearts, and to look at the world around us to comprehend the depth of our insanity, the depth of our lust for power, for wealth and for our wills to be done. But more than that, I would encourage us to move from the horror that we see when we look at our own hearts and the world around us to rest on that bit of sanity, "that still point of the turning world" that is Christ, dead, buried and brought back to life. For our sake. Let us give thanks that our God is not crazy.

Brian Dijkema (bdijkema@gmail.com) works for the Christian Labour Association of Canada and studies political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies.

Solid footing

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

I live on a quiet side street. Not much seems to happen here. But last summer I experienced that, even on side streets, opposing cosmic themes are played out – themes like chaos, ugliness, and sorrow versus order, beauty, and joy. There are times when these polar themes are so closely juxtaposed in time and space that one can only sit up and take notice. I did just that on a sultry August day after a difficult week in our neighbourhood.

A few days earlier our neighbours' adult son, John, had been killed in a tragic motorcycle accident. He lived in another part of the city with his wife, but he had often visited his parents. In fact, he was on his way to see them when he was killed. At times his parents had a volatile relationship. The police had often been called to their home to resolve domestic disputes. Through the years, I had seen John and his brothers emulate their parents' behavior, expressing their anger noisily and publicly on the front lawn.

After John's funeral his family returned to his parents' home. I was sitting on my front lawn reading a book when they arrived. Alcohol was served. As the hot afternoon wore on, the volume increased. Unresolved feelings and emotions intensified under the influence of grief, alcohol, and the oppressive heat. Occasionally, I glanced up from my book, sensing a situation growing steadily out of control – one marked by chaos, ugliness, and sorrow.

Un unexpected visitor

While sitting there, I was startled by a fledgling cedar waxwing, which flew directly at me and landed on my foot. I don't know who was more surprised, the bird or I. His tiny claws tickled my skin. His minute weight barely registered as he perched on my foot. I hardly dared to breathe, afraid that I would scare away this serene, unexpected, yet welcome guest.

My leg began to ache as I kept it still and waited for my husband Rinke to return from his bike ride. I didn't want him to miss the cedar waxwing's visit since he loves to watch birds.

Once in a while, the bird looked directly at me, opening his tiny, gray beak and emitting bird-words that could be interpreted as, "Feed me now." Of course, that wasn't possible without getting up and scaring him away. So, I ignored his piteous pleas.

When Rinke arrived home and saw the bird on my foot, he biked down the street to get our friend and neighbour, Lowell Witvoet, who also loves birds. Within minutes they returned, Lowell with his camera at the ready. Clicking away, he preserved a keepsake of a situation marked by order, beauty, and joy.

The lessons of birds

Because of what happened next across the street, I treasure the pictures Lowell took and gave to me later, along with a poem he wrote.

Voices continued to escalate in the post-funeral get-together. John's brother and John's widow started shouting at each other. Long-festering animosities erupted. Other family members separated the two. The brother shouted for the widow to leave. The widow wouldn't go. The brother was told to leave. He did for a moment, but furiously ran around the house to come at her from a different angle. I watched, dumbstruck, as a younger nephew tackled the brother to the ground so that he couldn't hurt the widow.

Later, when Lowell gave me the photos of the fledgling on my foot, I framed one and hung it in my office. I've kept the poem he wrote, too:

There once was a small cedar waxwing
whose flight was like that of a fledgling.
He flapped and he lurched
and did not get perched
till someone showed him solid footing.

Many times as I've looked at the picture, I've reflected on the last line of the poem: "till someone showed him solid footing." The picture and the poem remind me of what Oswald Chambers wrote in *Baffled to Fight Better: Job and the Problem of Suffering*, "God uses children, and books, and flowers in the spiritual instruction of a man" (Oswald Chambers Publications Associations and Marshall Pickering, 1931, pp. 45). To that list, I would add birds.

The cedar waxwing – vulnerable, tiny, and hardly significant compared to hawks and eagles – had found solid footing, a safe place on my foot. His eyes were on me, hoping I would feed him. He depended on me for a short time, and I did my best to comply. What a contrast to the solid footing God is for us, a Rock that will not be moved for all time. When troubles overtake us, we can rest there, as Jehoshaphat did when the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites attacked him. In trembling faith, we can say along with him, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (2 Chronicles 20:12b).

Cosmic themes will play themselves out in your life and on your street. When you're convinced that chaos, ugliness, and sorrow are the predominant themes, remember, like I do, my encounter with the fledgling cedar waxwing and celebrate order, beauty, and joy – God's victorious cosmic themes played out through all times and places because Jesus died, rose, lives, and intercedes for us.

Sonya Vanderveen (sonyavf55@hotmail.com) lives in St. Catharines, ON.

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra

U2 – *White as snow*

Where might we find the lamb as white as snow

There are very few new albums from current musicians or groups that I will run out and purchase on the day of release (Yes, I still buy my music from the store). The rock and roll band U2 is on the top of that list. A few Tuesdays ago, I was one of those people that excitedly went to the store, found the album, purchased it and ran back to the van to listen to it.

Bono

U2 has an impressive resumé. They have received 20 Grammy awards, have been playing for more than three decades and are arguably the biggest rock and roll band in the world today. They have recently released their 12th studio album called "No Line on the Horizon".

A controversial man of God

Bono, U2's frontman, singer and writer of most of their lyrics is an activist, particularly for the poor, and has used much of his celebrity status for that reason. Many have marvelled at how U2, with its worldwide popularity, can write and sing about the love of God.

But there are those that are looking for more. There are critics who say that U2 has a platform and they could use it to further God's kingdom. It has been said that Bono is in love with Jesus Christ as he is with himself.

Album cover "No Line On The Horizon"

In their new album "No Line on the Horizon", like all of their albums, you can read scripture in much of their songs.

In their song Magnificent, U2 addresses the grace that can only be given through love: I was born / I was born to be with you / Only love, only love can leave such a mark / But only love, only love can heal such a scar / I was born / I was born to sing for you / I didn't have a choice but to lift you up / And sing whatever song you wanted me to / I give you back my voice / From the womb my first cry, it was a joyful noise / Justified till we die, you and I will magnify / The Magnificent / Magnificent / Only love, only love can leave such a mark / But only love, only love unites our hearts / Justify till we die, you and I will magnify / The Magnificent.

Vision over visibility

U2 addresses many things in their new album. They address the holy moment of surrendering ourselves:

I was speeding on the subway / Through the stations of the cross / Every eye looking every other way / Counting down 'til the pain would stop / At the moment of surrender / Of vision over visibility.

I have incorporated a couple of U2 songs during our worship service at the church, Fruitland CRC of Stoney Creek, Ontario, where my family worships. One was during the offertory, and one was as a prelude. These were brought forth in instrument and song. Truthfully, I didn't trumpet that the songs were from a rock and roll band from Dublin but was pleased that the words and music connected with a wide age range of people.

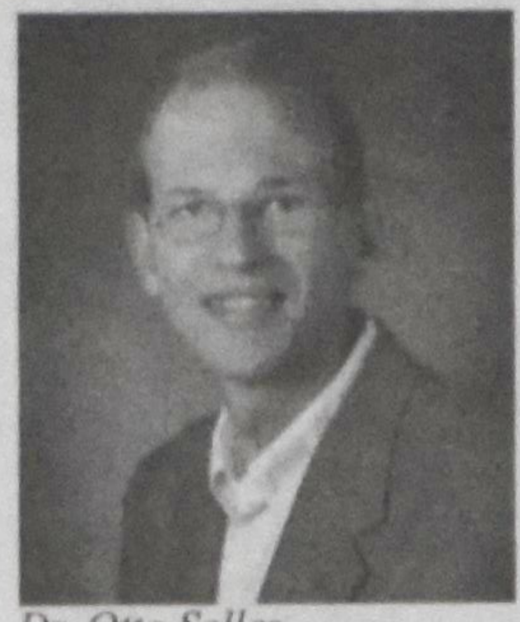
In "Get on your Boots", the first single of this album, they sing, "Here's where we gotta be / Love and community / Laughter is eternity / If joy is real."

Rock and roll is not the Bible. U2 will not save the world. They are four talented and popular musicians. But they might be able to point us in a direction where we will find who will save the world, and seeking is a good thing to do. As U2 asks in their new album, "Where might we find the lamb as white as snow"?

Mendelt Hoekstra (mendelt.hoekstra@gmail.com) is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, ON with his three children.

Opinion

Tolerance: vice, virtue, or joke


Dr. Otto Selles

During the week of February 23rd, Dr. Otto Selles, professor of French at Calvin College, toured through several southern Ontario universities as part of the annual Calvin Lectureship speaking tour. His topic was the much-lauded Canadian virtue of tolerance.

At the University of Guelph, Dr. Selles tackled the place of humour in tolerant society. Selles observed that everyone seems to start with a joke these days, from preachers to politicians. Yet, how far should joking go? For example, does one have the right to poke fun at others' beliefs in a free (ie. tolerant) society? While getting stern believers to "lighten up" may be a virtue, religious joking can often be perceived as an insult. What is the place of humour within Christian faith, specifically, as well as our broader contemporary society?

At the University of Western Ontario, Selles wondered if tolerance was a vice or a virtue. After exploring the four different ways in which tolerance has been historically understood (as enduring hardship, as granting permission, as putting up with something objectionable, and as recognizing differences), Selles challenged us to be more clear and precise in the language we use. For example, if we mean to say that there are differences between people, we should acknowledge them rather than standing behind the screen of tolerance. In the end, Selles wondered if tolerance really brought us very far down the path to love of the other, a core Christian calling in a diverse society.

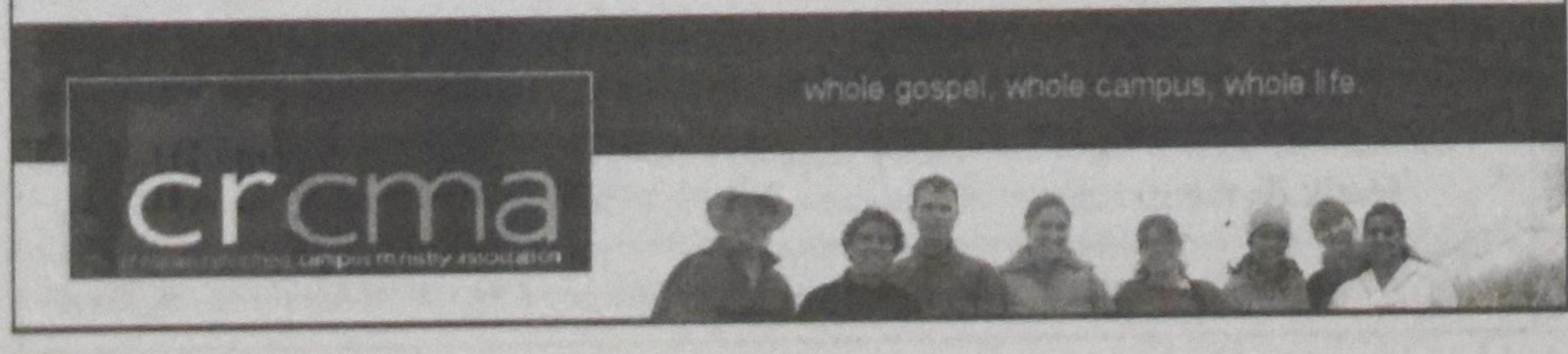
This year's theme is significant. As immigration and cultural trends shift, many changes have taken place throughout Western society. Christians are finding themselves as individuals and as a political force farther out on the margins than in previous years. This has lead to a variety of responses, including anxiety and a renewed effort to exert unified Christian influence at many levels of society. Recent research has shown, though, that this sort of tactic usually results in widespread negative responses from non-Christians. Which raises the question: how do Christians actually live as a distinct but engaged people within a diverse community?

Asking questions like this provides the opportunity for Christians to live their faith in a way that blesses the larger community. Growing out of passages such as Genesis 12 and Jeremiah 29, Christians can be cultural leaders by not resorting to methods like humour which carry the potential for misunderstanding or a bland tolerance which leaves society just as fractured as before. Instead, Christians can live lives of love – love of others who are different, even love of one's enemies. Self-sacrificial love knits people and communities together far better than mere tolerance. This is the challenging but contemporary growing edge of authentic Christian faith that this year's Calvin Lectureship addressed.

The Calvin Lectureship is a jointly-sponsored ministry of Calvin College and the Campus Ministry arm of Christian Reformed Home Missions. The purpose of this lectureship is "to develop and communicate a Reformed Christian perspective on some crucial academic discipline or culture at large" on public university campuses. For more information, please visit the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association website at www.crcma.com.

Rev. Michael R. Wagenman is a husband, father, and director of the Christian Reformed campus ministries at the University of Western Ontario in London. He is also an Executive member of the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association.

For complete information on upcoming lectures go to http://www.calvin.edu/admin/provost/scholars/lectureship/



Facebook face-off

We're starting a new kind of article at the Christian Courier: one written by all of you. We call it a Facebook Face-off. Periodically, we will ask a question on our Facebook group page (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=50535489152), and each reader is welcome to submit a short paragraph in response. When there are enough answers, we choose some to be published here.

Our first question was…

How you feel about Christian art (visual art, music, fiction, etc.)?

Scott William Fairley (Burlington, ON):

I feel very much that Christians should be leading the way and not playing catch-up when it comes to art. Christians deserve a higher place in popular culture than just pale imitations of existing art, and on the flip-side, our culture deserves a strong representation by Christians in the arts.

But that being said, until our role as artists becomes more in line with the cultural mandate, our criticism of art should be one of engagement and getting our hands dirty to search for meaning in popular culture first and foremost. Obviously, we won't find everything to be compatible with our faith, but finding meaning from new places is worth the effort if it allows us to be more relevant in an increasingly cynical culture.

Thomas Henry Boehm:

If all Christians would express their religion more openly in their daily lives and work then there would be so much Christian art that you wouldn't be able to get away from it. That doesn't mean that we would be making art that is meant to convert or teach, but art that expresses our faith through our life. Again, as in so many aspects of our lives we have separated our lives from our faith! What greater witness is there in this world, than if people see Christ's love reflected in our daily lives and work! I work at an underwear factory, and I hope that in some way that my faith, working through love, will be expressed in my daily work(however mundane that work may be). If artists would more freely express their faith through their works we would have true naturally contrived "Christian Art". Does this mean I want exclusively "Christian Art"? No, I want art that is made by Christians where there faith has been naturally expressed through the work and time they put into it.

Richard Bodini (Saskatoon, SK):

How do I feel about Christian art... music, fiction, etc?

A lot of the time sick to my stomach. Especially with fiction. Some of it is so pathetically written that I'm embarrassed to be a Christian. I would rather read a good book written by Joe non-Christian than a Christian. So much of Christian fiction does nothing to further the kingdom of God. There are some that help us to see and understand heaven and earth, but they are few and far between now these days. So I would rather turn back to Tolkien or Lewis and read them.

Music...some of it is wonderful...but so much is junk. Synthesizers, fake drums, dips and dos by the singer, heavy metal sounds with words that are difficult to understand.

Too many people slap "Christian" onto the package and then it sells like hot cakes. Which doesn't make it good or even Christian. Take *The Shack*. If enough copies were sold, they would make a movie. The book wasn't great fiction to begin with...so I can't see it being a great movie in the end. I think it will do more harm than good.

Ellen Vanderwerf (Vancouver, BC):

I have found that all beautiful art reveals an aspect of God – whether or not it is labeled Christian. For example, sometimes I have experienced "Christian" art that disappointed me because it did not reveal God to me, and I have also sometimes experienced "secular" art that surprises me with how profoundly it reveals a truth about God. My belief about art is that if it is true, it is from God. There is no other way, regardless of what the artist thinks. God is love, God is truth, so any artistic offering that stirs these emotions is from God. The labels we put on art do not mean too much to me. It seems a shame to label a beautiful piece "Christian" thereby limiting it's exposure only to people who are open to the Christian culture.

Solita Hoogendam:

What is "Christian" art anyway? Who deems "Christian" art Christian? Does a Christian artist necessarily equate "Christian" art? Along with these questions, we have to evaluate what the purpose of "Christian" art is. If its sole purpose is guardianship, than maybe we need to consider how discernment and engagement fit into our roles as Christians. Who isn't to say that faith is innate in all forms of art, regardless of the label that we so often find ourselves blinded by.

facebook

We want your feedback.

Join others in a discussion about *Christian Courier.* We are now on Facebook. Type *Christian Courier* in "search" or click on the link from our website at christiancourier.ca

Give us your ideas on improving the *Christian Courier* or opinions on articles.

He is risen!

The Gospel for Easter Sunday, April 16, 2006 EasterSunday Text -John: 20:1-9

Pope John Paul II

"Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando . . ." "Death and life have contended in that stupendous combat: The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal" (Easter Sequence). Once again, today, the whole Church pauses in amazement at the empty tomb. Like Mary Magdalen and the other women, who came to anoint with spices the body of the Crucified One, like the Apostles Peter and John who came running at the word of the women, the Church bows before the tomb in which her Lord was placed after the crucifixion. A month ago, as a pilgrim in the Holy Land, I had the grace of kneeling before the stone slab which marks the place of Jesus' burial. Today, Easter Sunday, I make my own the proclamation of the heavenly messenger: "He is risen, he is not here" (*Mk* 16:6). Yes, life and death were locked in combat and Life was victorious for ever. All is once again oriented to life, to Eternal Life!

"Victimae paschali laudes immolent christiani . . ." "Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise. The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb; and Christ, the undefiled, has sinners to his Father reconciled". The words of the Easter Sequence marvellously express the mystery accomplished in Christ's Passover. They point to the power of renewal flowing from his Resurrection. With the weapons of love, God has defeated sin and death. The Eternal Son, who emptied himself to become the obedient servant to the point of dying on the Cross (cf. *Phil* 2:7-8), has conquered evil at its roots by opening to contrite hearts the path of return to the Father. He is the Gate of Life who at Easter overcomes the gates of hell. He is the Door of salvation, opened wide for all, the Door of divine mercy, who sheds a new light on human existence.

The Risen Christ signals the paths of hope along which we can advance together towards a world more just and mutually supportive, in which the blind egoism of the few will not prevail over the cries of pain of the many, reducing entire peoples to conditions of degrading misery. May the message of life proclaimed by the angel near the stone rolled back from the tomb overturn the hardness of our hearts; may it lead to removing unjustified barriers and promote a fruitful exchange between peoples and cultures. May the image of the new man, shining on the face of Christ, cause everyone to acknowledge the inalienable value of human life; may it encourage effective responses to the increasingly felt demand for justice and equal opportunity in all areas of society; may it impel individuals and States to full respect for the essential and authentic rights rooted in the very nature of the human person.

Lord Jesus, our Peace (*Eph* 2:14), Word made flesh two thousand years ago, who by rising from the dead have conquered evil and sin, grant the human family of the third millennium a just and lasting peace; bring to a happy outcome the talks undertaken by people of good will who, despite so many doubts and difficulties, are trying to bring an end to the troubling conflicts in Africa, the armed clashes in some countries of Latin America, the persistent tensions affecting the Middle East, vast areas of Asia, and some parts of Europe. Help the nations to overcome old and new rivalries, by rejecting attitudes of racism and xenophobia. May the whole of creation, inundated by the splendour of the Resurrection, rejoice because "the brightness of the eternal King has vanquished the darkness of the world" (Easter Proclamation). Yes, Christ has risen victorious, and has offered man, Adam's heir in sin and death, a new heritage of life and glory.

"Ubi est mors stimulus tuus?" "O death, where is your sting?" (1 *Cor* 15:55), exclaims the Apostle Paul, touched on the road to Damascus by the light of the Risen Christ. His cry echoes down the centuries as the proclamation of life for the whole of human civilization. We too, the men and women of the twenty-first century, are invited to be mindful of this victory of Christ over death, revealed to the women of Jerusalem and the Apostles, when they arrived hesitantly at the tomb. Through the Church, the experience of these eye-witnesses has come down to us too. It is a significant part of the journey of the pilgrims who, during this Year of the Great Jubilee, are entering through the Holy Door, and going away with renewed courage to build pathways of reconciliation with God and with their brothers and sisters. At the heart of this Year of grace, may the proclamation of Christ's followers be heard more loudly and clearly, a joint proclamation, beyond all divisions, in ardent longing for full communion: "Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere". "Yes, that Christ is truly risen from the dead we know, Victorious King, your mercy show!"

Amen.

The language of adoption

From Toddlers to Teens

by Denise Dykstra

You know the old adage: "Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me?" Well, it's not always true. Words can and do hurt – even when they aren't meant to.

I've found this to be especially true in the world of adoption. Over the years I've had to shield my kids from things people have said in front of them without realizing the language they've used is hurtful.

It happened the other day at the swimming pool. My five-year-old daughter, Tia, and I were approached by another mother and her preschooler in the change room. "Excuse me," the mom said, "may we ask you a question? My daughter is wondering if you are (Tia's) mother." I understood why the woman's daughter was confused. I'm white, Tia is black. Unless you know she's adopted, you wouldn't know we're in the same family.

I knelt down and clarified our situation to the child. "I know we don't look alike but I *am* Tia's mother," I explained. "Tia came into our family through adoption." Then, to make sure the little girl understood: "I take care of Tia the same way your mom takes care of you. I feed her, put her to bed, tickle her...." The girl laughed and so did Tia. I was pleased; the conversation had gone well I thought. Until the mother thanked me, took her daughter by the hand, and turned to go with these words: "So she's not her real mom."

The look on Tia's face was devastating. The conversation was innocent enough – I knew the woman meant "biological" mom – but the words used implied that Tia was not a real part of our family. I didn't know what to say. So I fell back on humour. "She thinks I'm not real," I said to Tia in an exaggerated whisper. "She thinks I'm *fake*. Like imaginary. Maybe she can't even see me." Tia giggled and was distracted by making up stories about what it would be like to live with an invisible mom.

A powerful and dangerous tool

Language is a powerful tool. The things we say can build others up or do a lot of damage. If we are to love our neighbour as the Bible says we should, we need to keep in mind that certain words can have negative connotations, even if we don't intend them that way. We need to use proper terminology to prevent the people we're talking to – or talking about – from being offended. By not doing so, the woman at the pool unintentionally caused Tia to feel diminished and devalued. She unintentionally caused a five-year-old child to feel like an outside addition instead of an integral part of her family.

Adoptive children deserve the same respect for their feelings as everyone else. Unfortunately, many people don't know how to broach the subject of adoption politely. It often falls on those families who have been touched by adoption to be educators. So here's my own personal crash course on positive adoption language. Let's call it: Three things NOT to say.

1. Real, your own – both of these terms negate the message that adoption is a healthy way to form a family. They imply that in being part of an adoption one has somehow missed out on a "real" family experience. Avoid questions such as "Have they ever met their real mother?" or "Are they real brothers and sisters?" or "Do you have any children of your own?" Instead, when speaking about those involved in adoption, use the terms "birth parent" and "birth child." And don't talk about someone who "is" adopted. They "were" adopted, now they're just a plain old part of the family.
2. Lucky – we often hear how "lucky" our adoptive kids are to have us as parents. It's meant as a compliment, as praise for taking in children in need of a family. However, it's anything but complimentary to the kids. How would you feel if you were told you should be grateful to your parents for having you? Probably like a second-class family member. No one talks about how generous someone is for getting pregnant and giving birth.
3. Give up, give away – birth parents don't "give up" or "give away" their child. Language like that implies they are uncaring. Instead, birth parents "make an adoption plan" or "choose adoption." They do this because they feel it is best for the child. These terms imply they are responsible and in control of their own decisions, that they *do* care, and most importantly, that the child is worth caring for.

When talking about adoption, think about the message you are giving. Try to be as considerate as possible of the child's – and the parents' – feelings. And if you're not sure what terminology to use, ask. It's better for you, an adult, to feel uneducated than it is for a child to be hurt.

Denise Dykstra (dykstras@telus.net) is a stay-at-home mom of five kids – three biological and two adopted – ranging in age from 14 to 3. She is a freelance journalist who lives in Edmonton, Alberta.

Community

Church members facilitate life transformation

Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA)

Charlie's prison therapist did not know what to do. Charlie was about to be released from the Hamilton Detention Centre. As Charlie was a multiple sex-offender, the community had concerns about having a "high risk" offender in their neighbourhood. With Charlie's prison term finished there was no alternative but to release him. It was not good news for the residents of Hamilton.

Big time, big business

The number of persons in North American prisons is overwhelming – over 2.5 million persons. Despite the decreasing crime rate, the building of prisons in Canada is increasing at an unprecedented rate. In the United States, the growing number of private jails has nurtured an economic boom in some regions. Building and maintaining prisons used to be second only to the North American car industry in terms of economic stimulus to the economy. Today the criminal justice system has surpassed the auto making industry.

In Matthew 25, the followers of Christ – the collective known as the church – are called "to remember those in prison." Every person is responsible for their own choice. As members of the church and the nations, the larger communities are equally accountable and in need of redemption. The fact that some Christian Reformed Churches across Canada have prison visitation as part of their community witness and outreach is to be affirmed and celebrated. But what happens to inmates like Charlie? What is the inmate's hope? The prison experience has scarred prisoners, destroyed families and stigmatized prisoners for life. In Canada and United States, the rate of ex-prisoners returning to prison remains alarmingly high.

While serving as chaplain in the federal penitentiary, I soon realized that life after imprisonment would be difficult for ex-inmates. Incarceration damages people as no other human treatment does. When the penitentiary was founded during the 1830s in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the goal to isolate law-breakers from the community was well intended. Persons were locked up to reflect on their sinful behavior and come to repentance. After a period of time the focus on repentance lost ground in the penitentiary philosophy and practice. While rehabilitation may be a laudable goal for prisoners, how does one re-habilitate persons who were never "habilitated" – never had adequate social and life skills?

Penitence or punishment?

The assumption of much current criminal justice practice is that guilt must be punished. Our society has made prison punishment. Punishment requires the infliction of pain. The judge sentences persons to prison for punishment. The "good guys" need to get rid of the "bad guys". It is taken for granted that only the infliction of pain will make things right. The needs of the victim are not addressed. The causes of the criminal behavior are not searched out. The needs of the perpetrator are ignored. The prisoner is isolated from family and community. Anger festers within the prison walls. The time spent in prison does not equip inmates for life in the community. What hope remains for the 2.5 million inmates, who like Charlie, will be moving back into the neighborhood? And what about Charlie?

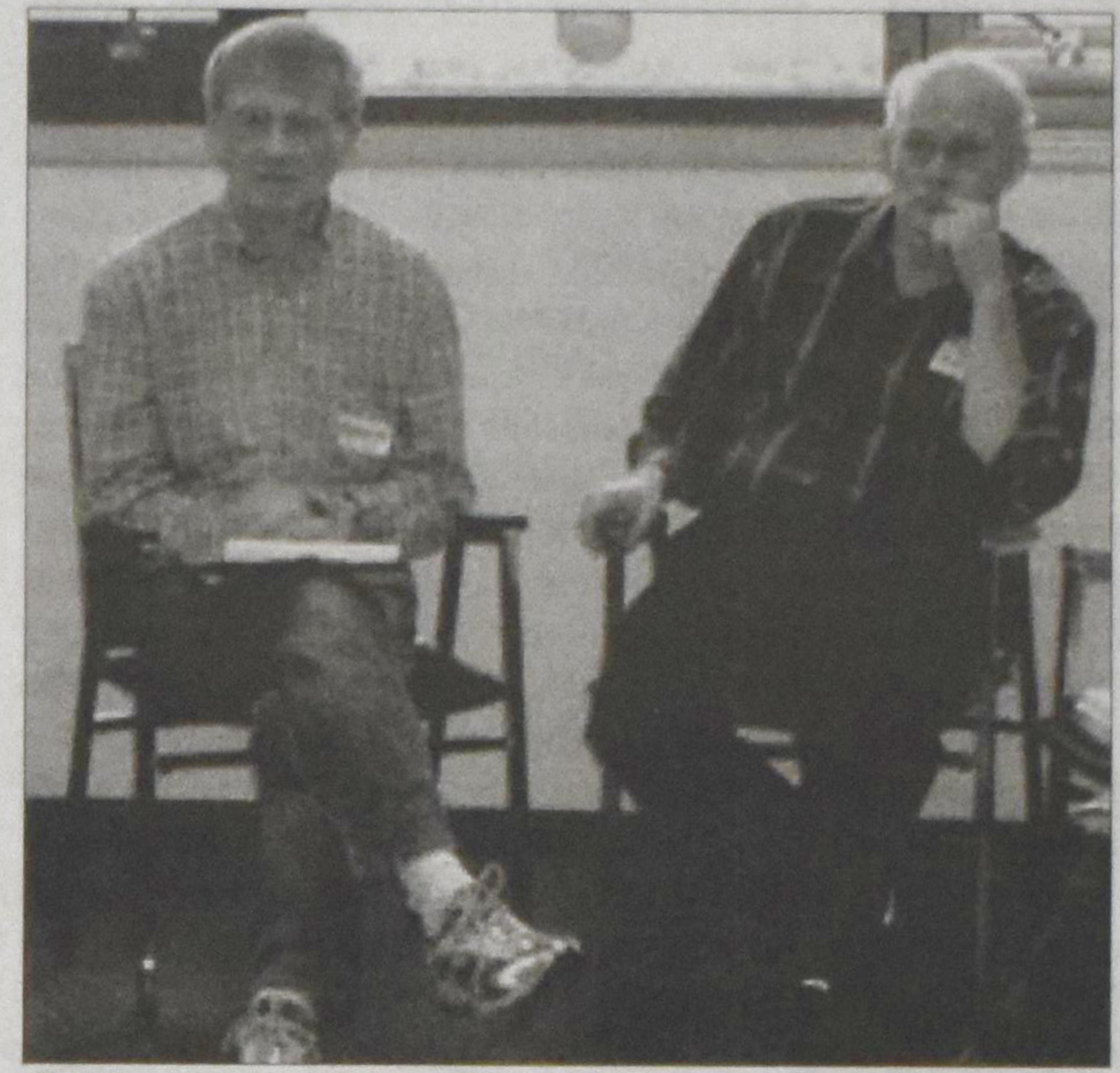
Dostoevsky first, and Winston Churchill later, stated that a society can be judged by the nature of its prisons. With the highest rate of imprisonment in the world, Canada and the United States are reliant on "warehousing" persons to solve social problems. In this corrosive and adversarial environment Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) offer hope for Charlie and the community.

In my experience as penitentiary chaplain there was one thing prison guards did not understand. Why were volunteers from the Montreal churches visiting inmates? "Why do you waste your time coming here?" they would say, "Don't you have better things to do? These guys are scum. You can't trust them."

Except for the Mennonite Central Committee and the Society of Friends, the silence of North American churches to address criminal justice matters has been painful. Does the silence represent complicity with the vengeful spirit that would rather turn the knife than turn the other cheek? "Vengeance is mine," says the Lord, but society has taken over. The prison visitation programs facilitated by Christian Reformed Churches and other congregations provide a foundation for church members, denominations and restorative justice practitioners to build on.

Charlie's angels

When Charlie was about to be released to the Hamilton streets, Rev. Harry Nigh remembered him from earlier M2W2 (Man to Man, Woman to Woman) visits to prisoners. Harry and members of his church renewed contact with Charlie. "Some of Charlie's friends and members of the local Mennonite community church had no idea that they were about to change the way that those considered 'high risk' were received in Canadian communities and internationally," writes Federal Inferfaith Committee member, Otto Driedger. What happened with Charlie and Harry Nigh and his congregants led to the birth of Circles of Support and Accountability.



CoSA volunteers Bernie Martens (left) and Wayne Northey participate in a training event in Abbotsford, BC, Canada.

Harry and his group wrestled with how they could address Charlie's needs. Discussions were held with Charlie's therapist. Someone suggested that a circle process be implemented. When led by a qualified leader, the circle provides a safe place for all participants. Harry and his congregants became the "Charlie's Angels" group. They met regularly with Charlie. The meetings enabled Charlie to share his many re-entry issues and challenges with the group. Charlie found the group interaction supportive. Soon Charlie's group realized that the circle needed to have an accountability component. With the accountability addition, they created what has now become known as Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). The values and practices of CoSA are deeply embedded within the community of the faithful and among restorative justice practitioners.

The conversations of Harry's congregants with the therapist and the creation of the first circle led church and policy makers to an illuminating discovery – "circling" persons like Charlie provided them with the support needed to begin to re-establish themselves in the community. Subsequent to the first circle, other circles were created. Over the years the success of re-integrating of sex offenders into the community by the efforts of the church members and restorative justice advocates was noted by the Canadian Commissioner of Corrections. Seed money was made available for more pilot circle projects. These circles helped persons like Charlie begin life again as a productive citizen. Successful circle experiences made by ex-inmates have made significant contributions to public safety.

Circles of success

Do the Circles of Support and Accountability work? Across Canada circles began to flourish spontaneously on an ad hoc basis. Do the circles actually reduce the recidivism rates? In 2005, research of the recidivism rate of CoSA participants and the rates of released inmates not involved in CoSA provided significant results. The reoffence of sex offenders in CoSA circles was 70 per cent less, the rates of violent offenders was 57 per cent less and the rates of general offenders was 35 per cent less. A second study in Canadian centres had equally encouraging results. British initiated circles had equally encouraging results. Major CoSA developments are now taking place in the U.S., U.K., Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Eastern Europe.

The Circles of Support and Accountability are a specific and practical application of the values and principles of Restorative Justice. Pastor Harry Nigh and his church members created a movement that has room for more faith community and church involvement. For Charlie, the caring members of the Hamilton Mennonite congregation made all the difference. CoSA, with 16 circles presently functioning across Canada, provides new and challenging opportunities for congregations to facilitate life transformation for persons like Charlie.

Charlie and other inmates are like the rest of us who bear the image of God. Like us, each needs to rediscover their god-given dignity and to know they are not alone. For thousands of inmates to be released this year, the bumpy experiences and stories of their new beginnings within the life of the circle will be told when church members are involved in "circling" persons like Charlie. The resulting life transformations renew hope, nurture responsibility within community and facilitate new beginnings.

Rev. John de Vries is the Restorative Justice Liaison in London, Ontario

Inauguration

This day is sharp.
It is trenchant.
This day is alive before the light,
blooming with evident readiness
and tiny men lifting their hats
and eagerly checking the time.
It is something to see.
At least in the darkness it is something to see.
After everything, it is something, to see.

It is painful:
to test the sun with your finger,
to know that it is hot,
a burning, turning ball of flame,
a million strange combustions
now hidden behind the earth.
Even the holes burn.

The expectation, the absence,
the knowledge of light burns.
And we in yet darkness shudder with preflame.
There is no knowledge available,
no sense to be made.
We are being availed of knowing.
Our senses are being made.

A tiny man taps the glass.
They shuffle and take their place.
We are burning with imminent dawn.
And all this time,
tripping and raw, fevered and fallen,
we have borne behind us blazing light.
We are shackled
and cannot escape the sun.

The night is burning with an unspoken word.
Soon the horizon will break.
Soon, in some parlour,
some gentleman will catch his hands
and unshutter the light.
His kingdom will burn,
will gape a maw
and fling a word:
a ghostwhite word with flailing limbs
spat upon the sky
like a prophet on the sand.

You smirk. You smuggle.
You reach a muscled arm from behind our heads
that we will never see.
Testing the edge of the forming hills,
your finger leaves a spray of blood.
"The day is sharp," you say,
"and may begin."

Brett Alan Dewing

valentine
A Division of Merit Vacations
Air Transat now more legroom
Amsterdam from $299.00
Taxes and service fees extra
Call us for **car rental** rates and **OAD tours**.
Holland America Alaska **cruise specials**
Escorted tours
Mississauga 905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144
London 519-472-2700 or 1-800-265-1141
TICO Registration #4499356

Low Interest Rates?

Ever considered a charitable
GIFT ANNUITY?

Sex and Age		Rate /amount		Charitable receipt	Tax Free	Taxable
Male	70	5.97%	$1,194	$5,791	$1,084	$110
Female	75	6.20%	$1240	$6,010	$1,202	$38

Amount based on sample of $20,000
Sample for joint life annuity (payable as long as either person is alive)

Sex and Age		Rate /amount		Charitable receipt	Tax Free	Taxable
Male 75 & Female	75	5.59%	$1,118	$4,889	$1,045	$73

Call or fax for an explanatory brochure and/or confidential no-obligation quotation.
Phone: 416-410-4244 I Fax: 416-465-6367 I www.linkcharity.ca
LinkCharity
Canada Inc.
1-800-387-8146 I 45 Harriet St, **TORONTO**, ON M4L 2G1

BUSINESS AND SERVICE DIRECTORY

Free Estimates
DYKSTRA BROS. ROOFING
St. Catharines: (905) 646-0199
Beamsville: (905) 563-7374
Burlington: (905) 634-6978
Email: info@dykstrabros.com
Website: dykstrabros.com

Re/Max Escarpment Realty Inc.

Mark Nyman
370 Wilson St. E, Unit #11
Ancaster, ON L9G 4S4
905-304-3303
Email: marknyman@remaxescarpment.com
Websitte: www.marknyman.com

Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA)
Now available.
Call for an application.
CRC Extension Fund
416-461-1207

MERRITT FUNERAL HOME
287 Station St.
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Serving Families for 4 Generations
Director: **Thomas C Merritt**
Fax 905-957-1371 Ph: **905-957-7031**
Website: www.merritt-fh.com FSAC

Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service

4184 Mountain St.
PO. Box 844
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
Ph: 905-563-4471
Fax: 905-563-4696
Email: wbts@bellnet.ca

MEESTER INSURANCE
Smithville, Ont.
Phone:
905-957-2333
or
1-800-465-8256
www.meesterinsurance.com
MEESTER INSURANCE BROKERS AGRI-BUSINESS SPECIALIST

JERRY'S AUTO BODY
(Beamsville) Inc.
Serving Beamsville and area since 1969
•Complete Collision Repairs
•Quality Refinishing
Jerry Gerritsen 5529 Regional Rd. #81
Alan Gerritsen Beamsville ON L0R 1B3
Phone/Fax: **905-563-7702**

Digital Art & Graphics Inc.
578 Upper James St.
Hamilton, ON L9C 2Y6
For all your printing needs
Call Brian or Kathie Bezemer at:
1-800-247-0155 or **905-574-0822**
Email: bezemer@digitalartandgraphics.com

BAKKER
BARRISTER & SOLICITOR
1 Keefer Road
St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 6K4
Email: bert@bakkerlaw.ca
East of Lock 1 - on site parking
905-688-9352
Albert J Bakker

ARIE HOOGERBRUGGE
Associate Broker
RE/MAX
DelMarRealty Inc.
840 Queenston Rd.
Stoney Creek,
ON L8G 4A8
Ph: 905-662-5300 Fax: 905-664-2300

R. HAALBOOM, Q.C.
Barrister Solicitor Notary
Richard Rijk Haalboom, Q.C., B.A., J.D
7 Duke St. West **Ph: 519-579-2920**
Suite 304 **Fax: 519-576-0471**
Kitchener, Ontario N2H 6N7
E-mail: richard@haalboom.ca

Classifieds

Anniversaries

Diever, The Netherlands Lacombe, Alberta
April 22, 1959 April 22, 2009

John and Alie Vander Meulen

are thankful for the **50 Years**
they've had together.
They are planning to celebrate the occasion
on May 30, 2009 with family and friends

With love from their children
Annette & Martin
Jessica, Victor, Allison, Ashley, Jeff
Jim & Geraldine
Jesse, Ian, Riley
Ted & Ingrid
Justin, Reuben, Jeremy, Adam
Judy & Peter
Julia, Amanda
Sylvia & Quentin
Rachel, Robin, Abegail
Vanesse & Chris
Steven, Sarah, Dylan

Home address: RR 1 Site 1 Box 27
Lacombe AB T4L 2N1

1959 April 17 2009
London, Ontario

The eternal God is your refuge
and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deut. 33:27

Everlasting arms – the loving and peaceful presence of the Lord
that has delighted with them in times of celebration and joy
that has comforted them in times of struggle and sorrow
ever present, never failing
drawing them ever closer to him
encouraging and enveloping
reminding them each day
that he will continue to bless and to guide in the years to come.

Our loving Heavenly Father has given the blessing
of **50 years of marriage** to

Tony and Jane Van Kampen (nee **de Kam**)

With thankfulness to God and much love,
Marjorie & Chris Perry, *Belleville, Ontario* – Matthew, Andrew, Daniel
Nancy & George Horlings, *Smithers, BC* – Jason, Meghan, Evan, Joshua
Ken, *with the Lord (Aug. 25, 1985)*
Sharon Van Kampen & Steve Johnston, *Listowel, Ontario* – Anthonie, Kenneth, Gerrit
Jennifer Van Kampen & Theo Katerberg, *Fordwich, Ontario* – Jordan, Malcolm

Home address: 192 Alison Road Thamesford ON N0M 2M0

Birthday

Let God be Praised!

Mr. William DeVisser

celebrates his **90th Birthday** on April 22 D.V.

With love, Tanny, Jack & May,
Dave & Carla, Peter & Jane, Marge,
Nelly & John, John & Sandra
26 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren

Address: Rm 302 Shalom Manor,
12 Bartlett Ave, Grimsby ON L3M 4N5

Obituaries

November 24, 1931 - March 10, 2009

Early Tuesday morning after a short battle with cancer
at St. Joseph's Healthcare Facility in Guelph

Gelmina Reinders

with her husband at her side, went to be with the Lord.
She was the loving, supportive wife of Ralph Reinders
and will be missed greatly by him
as well as their children and grandchildren that she adored:

Betty Reinders & husband Rick Stahlbaum, *Kitchener*
Kathleen & Olivia

Helen & Nick Kuipery, *Acton*
Nicole & Scott, Mike & Michelle

Mike Reinders

Harry & Henriette Reinders, *Rockwood*
Shannon, Amanda, Nathan, Jared & Kirk

Fred Reinders, *Rockwood*

Jay & Lisa Reinders, *Ballinafad*
Sara

A private family interment service followed by a time of visitation
and memorial service was held on Friday, March 15, 2009

Correspondence: Ralph Reinders, RR 1, Guelph ON N1H 6H7

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is
destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house
in heaven, not built by human hands. II Cor. 5:1

Nellie Audrey Kruysse (nee **DeHaan**)

Utrecht, The Netherlands St. George, Ontario
April 19, 1936 March 18, 2009

died suddenly from the effects of Huntington Disease,
an inherited brain disorder that causes progressive
deterioration of the physical, cognitive and emotional self,
that manifested itself during the later years of her life with us.

A Service of Remembrance of her life was held on March 21, 2009 at Hope Christian Reformed Church of Brantford where Pastor Ralph Koops both comforted and challenged us to "*...fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*"

Nellie is survived by her beloved husband of 50 years:
Eugene Kruysse
her children & grandchildren:
Richard
David & Cathy – Zack, Alyssa
Carol & James Ogle – Rachel, Sarah, David.
Sandra & John Polanick – Joseph & Edward Potvin
Her brothers & sisters:
Peter & Hilda DeHaan, *Orillia*
Maggie Oskam-deHaan, *Eden Mills*
Paul & Sylvia DeHaan, *Guelph*
Audrey & James Lubbers, *Cambridge*
Peter H. & Mary DeHaan, Ayer

Interment at St. George Cemetery took place on March 21, 2009.

Correspondence: PO Box 956, St. George ON N0E 1N0
Email eugenel@rogers.com

Obituaries

As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds his people
both now and forevermore. Psalm 125:2

Mary van Duyvendyk (nee **Littel**)

went to be with her Lord and Saviour on March 15, 2009. With gratitude to God for his blessings, we invite you to mourn with us her passing and to celebrate her life.

Mom's funeral was held in Brampton and in Ottawa on March 18 & 19, 2009.

Wife of Nic van Duyvendyk
Children: Jeremy & Elisabeth van Duyvendyk
Richard & Bernadette van Duyvendyk
Ronald van Duyvendyk
Janet & Thomas Baird
Oma to: Stephanie & James Van Straten
Nicolaas & Carolyn van Duyvendyk
Kristi van Duyvendyk
Nicolaas van Duyvendyk
Maarten van Duyvendyk
Matilda van Duyvendyk
Benjamin van Duyvendyk
Shannon & Kevin Donaldson
Heather & David Perkins
Janet & Tom Baird
Christopher & Lisa Baird
MaryLynn Baird
Great-oma to: Koen Perkins

Home address: Peace Tower 1003 - 45 Kingknoll Dr
Brampton ON L6Y 5P2

I will dwell in the House of the Lord Forever.
Psalm 23

November 22, 1918 – March 16, 2009

In the early morning hours of March 16, 2009, the Lord called home to glory our husband, father, Pake and Great-Pake

Gerrit (George) Pasma

Beloved husband of Alice Pasma (Stelpstra) for 61 years
Beloved Father, Grandfather & Great-grandfather of:
John & Grace Pasma, *Edmonton, Alberta*
Rachael & Keith (Drew, Desmond),
Jeremy & Sangita, Greg, Tim & Kathryn
Jake & Marjorie Pasma, *Mossely, Ontario*
Christy & Brent (Ashley, Leah, Scott)
Mike & Laurynda, Laurie & Jeff,
Derek, Kevin
Joanne & Bill Denharder, *Lyons, Ontario*
Allison & Dave (Owen),
Mark & Amanda, Teri-Lyn & Rob,
Jenna, Koralee (Rylan)
Keith & Judy Pasma, *London, Ontario*
Sarah & Kevin (Kylie, Brynna, Gracie)
Shannon & Jon (Mackenzie, Avery)
Andrea & Mike (Lailah)
Ben & Lynda Pasma, *St. Thomas, Ontario*
Matthew & Sara, Cheryl,
Lindsay & Aaron, Philip
Margaret & Wilf Greidanus, *Airdrie, Alberta*
Kurtis, Trevor, Spencer
Tim & Joanne Pasma, *London, Ontario*
Christopher & Kaitlyn,
Robert, Daniel, Lauren

Dear brother of Kees in Holland and predeceased by 7 brothers & sisters.

A memorial service was held at the Bethel Christian Reformed Church on March 19, 2009 with Pastor John Van Til and Pastor Gerrit Haagsma leading the service.

Correspondence address: Alice Pasma
263 Clarke Road, London ON N5W 5E7

Jesus said to him (her) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me." John 14:6

Fennie Flokstra (nee **Drok**)

Passed away peacefully at Shalom Manor in Grimsby on Thursday, March 12, 2009, at the age of 97.

Predeceased by her husband Roelof (1978) and her daughter Coby Hoekstra (nee Flokstra) (1999).

Dearly loved mother of:
John & Evie Flokstra
Hetty & Eilt Hartman
Casey & Maryke Flokstra
Joe Flokstra
Grace & Henry Bloemsma
Andy & Margaret Flokstra
Jeanette & Greg Cross
Koop & Clara Hoekstra
Cherished Oma of 20 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren.

Our comfort is that she now dwells in the House of the Lord forever.
A Memorial service was held on March 17, 2009 at the Mount Hamilton Christian Reformed Church.

Correspondence address: Hetty Hartman
221 York Rd, Dundas ON L9H 1N1

Thy word is lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119:105

On March 15, 2009

H.W. (Bill) Verveda

of Edmonton went to be with his Lord.

He is survived by
his wife, Jane of 48 years;
his six children:
Jannette (Don) Nauta *of Calgary AB*, Clarence (Trish) *of Alix AB*, Bea (Pete) Vlieg *of Leduc AB*, Winny (Dave) Bolink *of Victoria BC*, William (Angela) *of Waterdown ON*; Kevin (Val) *of Edmonton AB*; 25 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild; 2 brothers and 1 sister.

Bill was born in Almen, Netherlands on April 13, 1937. He loved taking pictures of God's creation when he was traveling, hiking, camping, sailing, or skiing. He loved his time spent with family and friends. He devoted much of his time to church, Christian Schools and many Christian ministries.

A Memorial Service was held on Monday, March 23, at Bethel Christian Reformed Community Church of Edmonton, AB.

Correspondence: Jane Verveda
311-130 Ave NW, Edmonton AB T5A 3A9

Agatha 'Aty' Vanderwel

Peacefully passed away in her sleep at the Holland Christian Homes, Grace Manor, Brampton on Monday, March 30, 2009 in her 84th year.

Aty will be greatly missed by her loving husband John, her children Gerry and Lydia, Gundy and Don, Arlen and Kathy, Ralph and Nancy, Mary Ann and Bruce, her eight grandchildren and her one great-grandchild. Aty is survived by her two sisters Hanna and Ria.

Friends were received at the Ward Funeral Home in Brampton on Wednesday April 1. Funeral Service was held on Thursday April 2 at the Clearview Christian Reformed Church in Oakville at 11 a.m. Interment at Glen Oaks Cemetery.

As an expression of sympathy, donations to the Alzheimer's Society would be appreciated by the family.

Sympathy Cards may be sent to The Ward Funeral Home, 52 Main Street South, Brampton ON L6W 2C5 or agatha.vanderwel@wardfh.com
They will then be forwarded on to the Vanderwel family.

Personals

I am a single woman in my late 30's living north of Toronto. I am hoping to meet a single man for companionship, adventure, and romance.

Reply to File #2765
c/o Christian Courier
5 Joanna Dr
St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1

Job Opportunities / Advertising

Book for Sale

Igor the Acolyte

Aren P. Geisterfer is the author of this novel which is essentially fiction, though it is based on historical war events.

It deals with the two wars in Indonesia between 1941 thru the spring of 1946. It is written from the perspective of a 14-year-old boy and is written in the lingua franca of young teenagers.

This story contains explicit material suitable for mature readers. 650 pages Price $49.00 excludes Can. postage

Email: arengeisterfer@sympatico.ca
or 28 Rue Osgoode,
Gatineau QC J9H 1R7

For the book review see March 9 issue p.17

PRINCE GEORGE CRC is seeking a

part-time **Children's Ministry Coordinator**

We are looking for a creative leader to facilitate our growing children's programs, particularly Sunday School and Vacation Bible Camp.
For more information about our community and programs please see www.pgcrc.ca.
To apply, please submit a letter of interest and resume to egadema@shaw.ca attn: Discipleship and Outreach Committee.

For Rent

House for Rent – 3 bedroom + den, 1-1/2 storey centrally located to London, Woodstock, Tillsonburg, and St. Thomas. $750.00 per month plus utilities.
Phone No.: **519-269-3939**

Vacation

For rent: 2 bedroom, 2 bath **guest cottage** in **Tallahasee, Florida**. $650 per week furnished with linens, close to state park, hiking & biking trails, tennis. Call **850-386-6648**

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA
Coming to Alberta? Stay in one of our cozy cottages.
Contact Ernst & Louise Sluijmers
403-329-8181 www.elbas.com

Holiday in Holland
Beautiful self-contained cottage and vehicles in **Friesland**
www.chestnutlane.nl

ADA REALTY LTD

2011-137 Ave. Suite 404
Edmonton AB T5A 4W2

780-473-8149

Sid Vandermeulen

Contact us first
when you think of moving
to Edmonton & district.
Home of confidence

Pastor of Congregational Care

MOUNTAINVIEW CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH of Grimsby, ON is seeking a full time, ordained Pastor, who will fill a newly created position responsible for leading and equipping our Pastoral and Diaconal Ministry Teams. This person will ensure that all aspects of congregational care are being fulfilled, and reflect the vision of our church. We are an 800+ member congregation led by a staff ministry team which presently includes a Lead Pastor and a Youth Pastor. The town of Grimsby is a growing community located on the southern shores of Lake Ontario in the heart of Niagara.
Please send inquiries to:

Search Committee, Mountainview CRC,
290 Main St. E., Grimsby ON L3M 1P8

or email: searchcommittee@mountainviewcrc.org.
Further information may be obtained by visiting our website www.mountainviewcrc.org
or contacting Annette Klingenberg, chair of Search Committee, at 905-563-5736 (evenings 7pm-10pm EST)

Grace Christian Reformed Church
of **Cobourg, Ontario** is looking for a

full time, experienced pastor

As our pastor you will cultivate a close relationship with God; and through effective preaching, worship and encouragement you will help to grow our spiritual passion and deepen the fellowship among our members. Your gifts should also include the ability to engage our youth and inactive members. Cobourg is a small, beautiful city named "the gem of Lake Ontario", located approx. 110 km. east of Toronto.

A church profile is available. Please contact search committee chair Toby Smits at *smitseng@eagle.ca* or call (905) 349-3454 evenings or weekends.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO

OACS

ONTARIO ALLIANCE OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
790 Shaver Road
Ancaster ON L9G 3K9
t. 905-648-2100
f. 905-648-2110
oacs@oacs.org

The Board of Directors invites nominations, applications and expressions of intent for the position of **Executive Director** of the Ontario Alliance of Christian School Societies.

Founded in 1952, situated in the Niagara biosphere, the OACS provides a wide range of education services to a family of 80 schools.

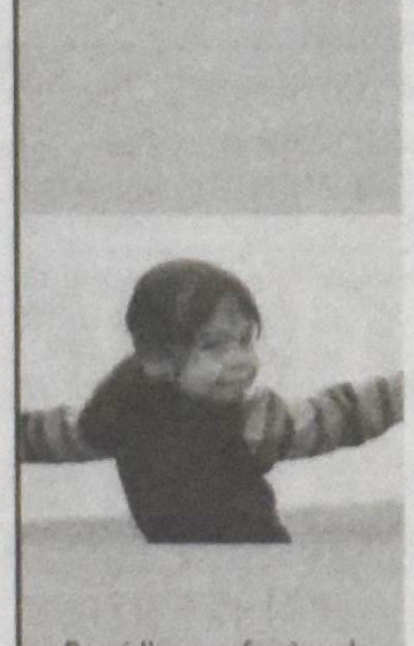
The CEO will have a proven record of respected leadership and will possess appropriate credentials from accredited institutions.

Committed to excellence and innovation, he or she will embrace the mission of the OACS to be a growing organization dedicated to quality and justice for Christian education Ontario. The Executive Director will possess the ability to represent the OACS effectively at provincial and national levels to the partnering organizations, various branches of government and the media.

While applications will be accepted until a new Executive Director is selected, interested persons are encouraged to submit materials to the address below by May 31, 2009.

Applications should include a current CV and will be held in strict confidence. This advertisement is directed primarily at Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Please send your applications to:
Mr. J. VanHuizen, Chair, Search Committee
8 Applecrest Lane, RR 1
Trenton ON K8V 5P4
search@oacs.org



Providing professional solutions for Christian schools since 1952

A detailed job description is available at www.oacs.org/webservices/jobs/

www.oacs.org

Canada/Netherlands Friendship Day

May 2 & **4** See Calendar of Events for more details.

HIGH SCHOOL IT TEACHER / COORDINATOR

Bulkley Valley Christian School is located in Smithers, in the heart of the beautiful Bulkley Valley. It is a well established interdenominational school of 260 students in two campuses: Elementary (preK–6), Secondary (7-12).

Bulkley Valley Christian School will have an opening for a qualified teacher who can take responsibility for the instructional components and the coordination of our Information Technology program.

The successful candidate will have a strong commitment to Christian education, the ability to work well in a collaborative setting, an understanding of the unique needs of high school students, and the ability to articulate the importance of the use of information technology in the development of the Christian cultural mandate. This person will have background in the areas of desktop publishing; digital editing of images, sound, and video; and some web design and business applications. The successful candidate will have a small role in the IT support needs at the high school campus.

Some background in Windows networking and the Mac platform will be an asset.

This position commences August 2009. The successful applicant must hold, or be eligible for, a valid BC Teaching Certificate and meet the requirements of the BVCS Employment Contract.

For further information, please contact Hugo VanderHoek, Principal.

Applications including a current resume, a brief cover letter, three references, a statement of your philosophy of Christian education, a statement of faith, and credentials should be submitted to the attention of:

Hugo VanderHoek, Principal
Bulkley Valley Christian School
PO Box 3635, 3575 14th Ave,
Smithers BC, V0J 2N0

Phone: 250-847-4238
hvanderhoek@bvcs.ca
www.bvcs.ca

Dordt College

Staff Opening

Learning Community Area Coordinator – The office of Student Services has a potential opening for a Learning Community Area Coordinator. As an Area Coordinator, this individual would serve as an educator, role model, facilitator, mentor, leader, administrator, and an essential person in the effective operation of the residence life learning community program. Primary responsibilities would include supervising, training and evaluating student staff, advising the hall programming council, maintaining the general operation of two residence halls including attention to significant administrative details, budget management, assessment of the physical environment and communication with the custodial staff. Other duties include monitoring the academic success of each hall, working with at-risk students to develop a plan for their success, and encouraging the development of student leaders.

This is a full-time, 12-month administrative staff position. A Bachelor of Arts degree is required, and a Master of Arts degree is desired, or an equivalent combination of education and experience in student personnel or closely related field and two years of residence hall experience. Other requirements include a demonstrated knowledge of residence life programs and issues, as well as excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills.

To Apply – Candidates with the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other people and a strong commitment to the Reformed faith and the mission of Dordt College should send a cover letter and resume to the Director of Human Resources at:

Dordt College Human Resources
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
Phone: (712) 722-6011
Fax: (712) 722-6035
E-mail: hr@dordt.edu

Dordt College does not discriminate as to sex, age, national origin, marital status or against those who are disabled.

---

facebook **We need your feedback.**
Join others in a discussion about *Christian Courier*. We are now on Facebook. Type *Christian Courier* in "search" or click on the link from our website at christiancourier.ca Give us your ideas on improving the *Christian Courier* or opinions on articles.

Classifieds

★ 39 YEARS OF SERVICE ★

CRC EXTENSION FUND

"...serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

New rates to June 30, 2009

- We pay **3.25%** on CRC deposits.

Earn approx. **3.5%** on RRP/RRIF/TFSA

Write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St, Toronto ON M4L 2G1

Fax: 416-465-636 **Call: 416-461-1207**

Elim Investment Opportunities

Bonds
Available @ Prime

Promissory Notes
Available @ Prime plus1%

This is not to be construed as an offer to solicit investments and no investment can be made until the Investor has received an Information Statement issued by Elim Housing Society.

Established by the Elim Housing Society in 1995, Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Based and operated on Christian principles, Elim's vision is to provide various levels of quality care for seniors.

Today, over 400 people call Elim home and are able to enjoy the benefits of living within a caring Christian retirement community. As part of Elim's ongoing successful financial strategy, we offer a variety of investment opportunities. Our rates are determined by the Royal Bank of Canada's prime rate.

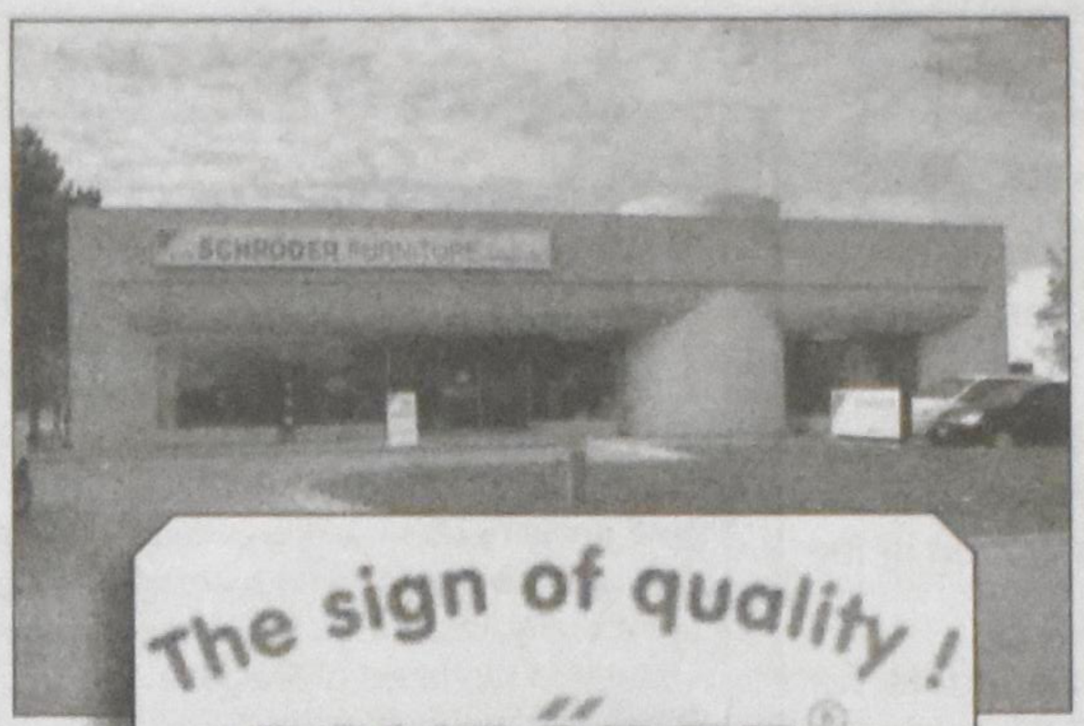
We currently offer **Royal Bank of Canada's prime plus 1%** (not to exceed 7%)

On Mar 4th, 2009, Elim Investments were accruing interest at **3.5%**

ELIM Village

For more information regarding investment with Elim Village, contact **Terry-Lynn Dryfhout** at **tld@elimvillage.com** or call **604.583.3546 Ext 4031**
Visit our website at **www.ElimVillage.com**

A Christian Retirement Community



The sign of quality!

SCHRÖDER® FURNITURE Canada Ltd.

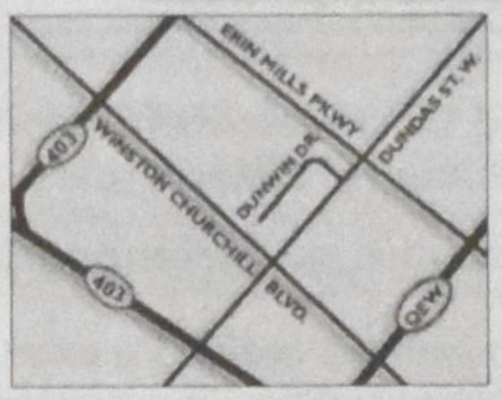
Do you have problems getting out of your existing furniture?

Is your sofa wearing soft?

Our Coil Spring Constuction gives you a lifetime of

pain free comfort

At Schroder furniture you can find exceptional **Quality** and **long lasting** Seating Comfort.



Come and visit us at
2140 Dunwin Dr.
Mississauga, Ontario
905-828-9511
www.schroderfurniture.com

First CRC Sarnia, Ontario will be celebrating the **75th anniversary** of its organization the weekend of **May 30, 31.**

A banquet will be held on Saturday night with special services held on Sunday.

All friends and former members are centainly invited and welcome to join in this celebration.

For more information or to order banquet tickets please e-mail us at 1crc75@gmail.com or call the church office at 519-336-8808.

For issue dates, deadlines, contact information and more, visit our website at: christiancourier.ca
or email: admin@christiancourier.ca

Tyler vanMiddelkoop
CFP, CLU

Beat the Bank.

Call me today for a no obligation assessment on your Mortgage Insurance.

P.V.&V. Financial Centre
905 632 0240
1 866 694 7272
www.pvv-insurance.com

Unique Oak European Furniture
at the
Furniture Barn

Imported from
Belgium & Holland

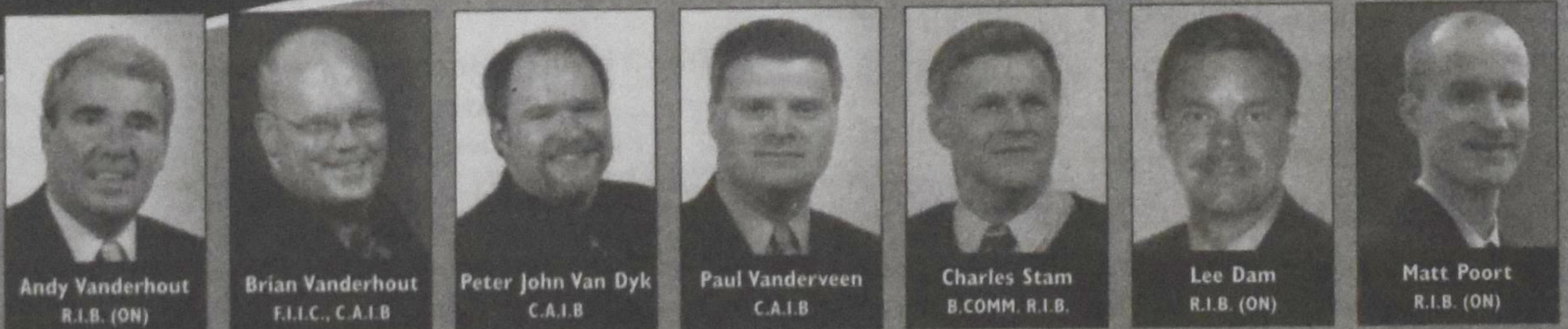
Couches, Chairs
Tables, Wall Units
Decorative Items
'Dutch Bikes'

'Old World'
Craftsmanship
& Comfort

'pop in & enjoy a cup of coffee'

app'ts/info call: **905 563-0209** **Herman & Janny Dunnink**
51383 Hewitt Rd. Wainfleet hjdunnink@hotmail.com

Call our EXPERIENCED TEAM of PROFESSIONALS for a quote Today!



Andy Vanderhout R.I.B. (ON) | Brian Vanderhout F.I.I.C., C.A.I.B | Peter John Van Dyk C.A.I.B | Paul Vanderveen C.A.I.B | Charles Stam B.COMM. R.I.B. | Lee Dam R.I.B. (ON) | Matt Poort R.I.B. (ON)

Toll-free: 1 866-694-7276
Tel: 905-632-6192
www.pvv-insurance.com

P.V.&V. Insurance Centre
Trust our EXPERIENCE

A division of Peacock, Vanderhout & Vandyk Insurance Brokers Ltd.

UNIGLOBE DCA Travel & Cruise

Visit us at:
www.uniglobedcatravel.com
info@uniglobedcatravel.com
TORONTO: 416-224-5211
1-800-667-2525
Canada wide - ticket home delivery

TRAVEL INSURANCE - HEALTH/CANCELLATION/COMPREHENSIVE

AMSTERDAM
KLM/AIR TRANSAT
From CA **$349** taxes CA $429
plus service fees

FLORIDA / ORLANDO
Includes air / 7 nights accomodation / car
From CA **$299** taxes CA $242

GREECE - AEGEAN SPLENDOR
Includes air/ transfers / 15 meals
4 night cruise/3 nights Athens & city tour
From CA **$1149** taxes CA $491

MSC TRANSATLANTIC CRUISE 18 DAYS
Venice/Fort Lauderdale Oct 24 - Nov10
$843.70 port charges $455. govt. fees $76.95 transfers $59.00
- kids pay only govt fees/transfers -
- add on option: 6 day tour of Italy
- Air prices on request

This is your Travel Centre for all your Travel Needs!!! On. Reg. 01495598

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Apr 10 "Good Friday": Grand Philharmonic Choir of Kitchener, Ontario under the direction of Howard Dyck, will be performing Bach's famous St. Matthew Passion. Time 7:30, Place: Centre in the Square, Kitchener, Ontario. For tickets call 519-578-1570 or 1-800-265-8977. For any other information: Broer@csolve.net

Apr 19 Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Herman Praamsma will be preaching.

Apr 24-25 Marriage Encounter weekend, **London**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to www.reformedme.org or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario_registration @reformedme.org

May 2 Canada/Netherlands Friendship Day: flag raising ceremony 12 noon at Burlington City Hall, music and anthems by the " Ambassadors".

May 4 Canada/Netherlands Friendship Day celebrations continue at the Royal Botanical Gardens. Doors open at 6 P.M. Program starts at 7 P.M, music by the "Liberation Choir", free admission. For more info visit www.cnfa.ca or contact Jack van der laan at 905 332 7000 or Hans Kloet at 905 336 718.

May 4, 5, 7, 8 Vision Banquet ~ Eurovangelism featuring guest speakers from Albania, Besa Shapllo and Romania, Hardi Kubassek. Locations **Brampton, Orangeville, Cambridge, Brighton**. Call Brian Lise at 1-866-630-6301 for *complimentary* tickets

May 23 Combined nine Male Choirs (over 300 voices) from Southwestern Ontario, will present D. V. a Festival of Praise Concert, singing all Sacred mass numbers, at the Centennial Hall, 555 Wellington Street, London, Ontario. Saturday, at time 7:30 p.m. Doors open 6:30 p.m. Tickets $13.00 from all choir members and host Choir: St. Thomas District Male Choir "Crescendo". For tickets and information please call: (519) 637-4357 or (519) 631-9245 No reserved seating.

May 30 John Knox Christian School, **Brampton**, would like to invite former students & staff to our 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Golf Tournament 7:00 a.m., Open House 4-6 p.m. & dinner 6:30 p.m. See our website for details & registration information:www.bramptonjkcs.org or email us: blessings@bramptonjkcs .org Please bring your JKCS memorabilia for the Open House.

May 30,31 First CRC **Sarnia**, Ontario will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. A banquet will be held on Saturday night with special services held on Sunday. All friends and former members are certainly invited and welcome to join. For more information or to order banquet tickets please e-mail us at 1crc75@gmail.com or call the church office at 519-336-8808.

June 3-5 ACROSS BORDERS an international conference featuring Dutch-Canadian and Dutch-American history and culture, to be held at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster**. For more details please contact Petra Zantingh pzantingh@redeemer.ca 905.648.2131

A **charitable** gift **annuity** offers:

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

- the peace of mind of a guaranteed lifetime income, largely tax free
- the satisfaction of knowing that you will be providing a future gift for Redeemer University College

Blended rate of 6 - 10% (capital returned & interest) for those over 65. Please contact us for your own confidential, no-obligation quote. Information available on other gift-planning options as well.

Christian Stewardship Services

Redeemer University College 777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
905-648-2139 ext. 4205 (Ben) stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

MARANATHA HOMES

Living **independently** in Christian **community**

Maranatha Homes, located in south Burlington near many amenities, is a place where Christian seniors can enjoy independent living in community with others.

- Reasonable rent rates at $740 per month
- Newly renovated units
- Award winning architectural design
- Well maintained building and grounds
- No condo fees or utility bills

All this and more make Maranatha Homes an attractive and affordable accommodation for seniors.

For further information contact: Rosanne van der Woerd,
109-3260 New St. Burlington,On. L7N 3L4
905-681-0311 Email: rvanderwoerd@sympatico.ca

Wallaceburg Bookbinding
& MFG. CO. LTD.

We Bind, Rebind and Restore

Save money– Don't buy replacements!

Churches: Send us one of your hymnals as a sample and we will rebind it at no cost. *Normal price for quantities of five or more-$8.75*

Personal Orders: We will bind short run editions e.g. family histories as well as rebinding and restoring personal books.

1-800-214-2463 FAX (519)627-6922
95 Arnold St. Wallaceburg ON N8A 3P3 http://wbmbindery.com

Planning a Gift to Charity?

Call CSS for impartial, confidential, and **free** professional advice *across Canada*.

Connecting Donors, Charities & Ministries

Christian Stewardship Services 1-800-267-8890 | admin@csservices.ca
www.csservices.ca

De Nederlandse COURANT

North America's oldest and most published Dutch language paper and exclusive aftermarket distributor of the Libelle and Margriet magazines in its 54th year of publication.

SPECIAL NEW SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

De Nederlandse COURANT: ❑ 1 year $15.00 (regular $30.00)
❑ 2 years $35.00 (regular $57.00)

❑ **Margriet or** ❑ **Libelle with De Nederlandse COURANT:**
❑ 1 year $100.00 (regular $150.00)
❑ 2 years $190.00 (regular $270.00)

Name:____________________
Address:____________________
City/Code:____________________
Phone:__________ **E-Mail:**__________

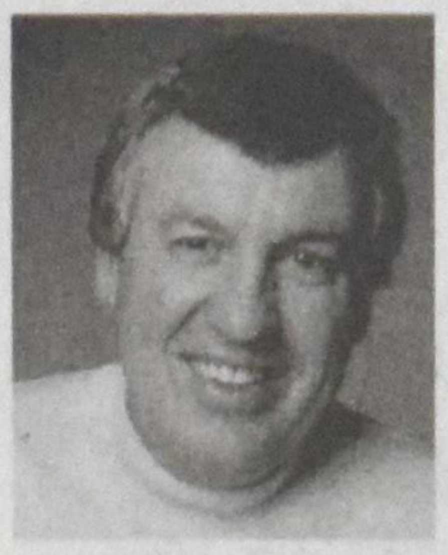
Mail coupon with your cheque to:
De Nederlandse COURANT
2110 Hunt Crescent, Burlington ON L7M 2N9

Put our experience to work for you.

THE KLOET SCHURINGA TEAM RE/MAX

Outstanding agents. Outstanding results.

Lifetime Achievement Award / RE/MAX Platinum Award / Hall of Fame



George Kloet
Sales Representative
gkloet@trebnet.com
www.georgekloet.com

Pauline Schuringa
Sales Representative
pschuringa@trebnet.com
www.paulineschuringa.com

RE/MAX Realty Enterprises Inc., Brokerage
1697 Lakeshore Road West
Mississauga, ON L5J 1J4
Tel.905.855.2200

Grand Philharmonic Choir of Kitchener, Ontario under the direction of Howard Dyck, will be performing Bach's famous

St. Matthew Passion

"Good Friday" **April 10** at 7:30, at the Centre in the Square, **Kitchener**, Ontario.

For tickets call 519-578-1570 or 1-800-265-8977. For any other information: Broer@csolve.net

GRAND PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

News

Let justice flow like a river: the CRC and creation care

Earth Day – insidious, irrelevant, incidental or integral?

Cindy Verbeek

Have you ever watched water gather on a window pane? It starts as a mist at the top, then gathers into small droplets that edge down – sometimes quickly, sometimes stuck on invisible bumps on the window pane. The drops grow and connect with other droplets, increasing in size until a stream of water flows down like a small river.

In many ways, creation care in the CRC church is like that water. Biblically, the message has always been there; the covenant relationship between God, humans and all of creation, and our special role as God's stewards, is like a mist on our consciousness. Our creeds and confessions show that even people long ago were aware of the biblical message. Over the last 20 years, the mist has slowly gathered into droplets in the minds and lives of Christians. As we edge forward together, the droplets move quickly at times, occasionally getting stuck before joining with other droplets and gathering speed again.

PHOTO BY LEE WEBB

Dave Bookless, Director of A Rocha UK, a Christian conservation organization, describes four attitudes he encounters in churches regarding creation care, and members of the CRC may recognize themselves in one of these categories too.

Insidious

A small group of people believe that an emphasis on creation care is menacing or dangerous. Too much of it smacks with New Age, secular humanist thought and evolutionism, and therefore the best thing Christians can do is stay as far away from it as possible.

Irrelevant

Another group feels that our activities on this earth are not of consequence. Only souls and spiritual things matter, so we should not spend time and money on anything other than evangelism. This has not been my experience with the CRC, since our worldview is founded on the belief that all aspects of life should be infused with our love of and service to Christ. Furthermore, the Apostles' Creed begins with recognition that God is Creator of heaven and earth. The Belgic confession says, "He has given all creatures their being, form, and appearance, and their various functions for serving their Creator" (Article 12). The Heidelberg Catechism says, "Providence is the almighty and ever present power of God by which he upholds…heaven and earth and all creatures…" (Lord's Day 10 QA 27). Our World Belongs to God reads, "As God's creatures we are made in his image to represent him on earth…by sovereign appointment we are earth-keepers and caretakers; loving our neighbour, tending the creation, and meeting our needs…" (section 10).

Incidental

The third group feels that creation care is incidental, or at least secondary to other issues. This is the predominant reaction in the Christian Reformed Church. "There are so many good things to be involved with and I'm so glad you/A Rocha/Cal DeWitt are doing that creation care stuff, but it's just not my area of interest so don't bother me with it."

Integral

As Bookless explains, however, "care for the environment is not an optional extra for Christians. It is essential to the gospel." The Bible teaches us that when God created all things, humans "were put in the garden to tend it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15), but because of Adam and Eve's sin, the ground is cursed (Gen. 3:17). Jesus Christ came to reconcile not just humans but all of creation (Col. 1: 15-20) and, just like us, all creation waits for Christ's return (Rom. 8:19-21). And there will come a time "for destroying those who destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18).

We certainly need to beware of becoming Eco-pharisees, policing every action and guilting each other into becoming "earth friendly." Admittedly, our eternal salvation does not depend on what kind of household cleaner we use. But it is a discipleship issue. How does the Christian Reformed Church train disciples whose lives reflect the belief that our world belongs to God? As more and more CRC people ask this question, we are on the brink of seeing multiple droplets converge into a stream of eco-justice flowing across this land. My prayer is that we do not do this to jump on any secular band wagon, but because it is rooted in our faith as it is revealed to us through studying the Word of God and recognizing our role in his good creation. Destination: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

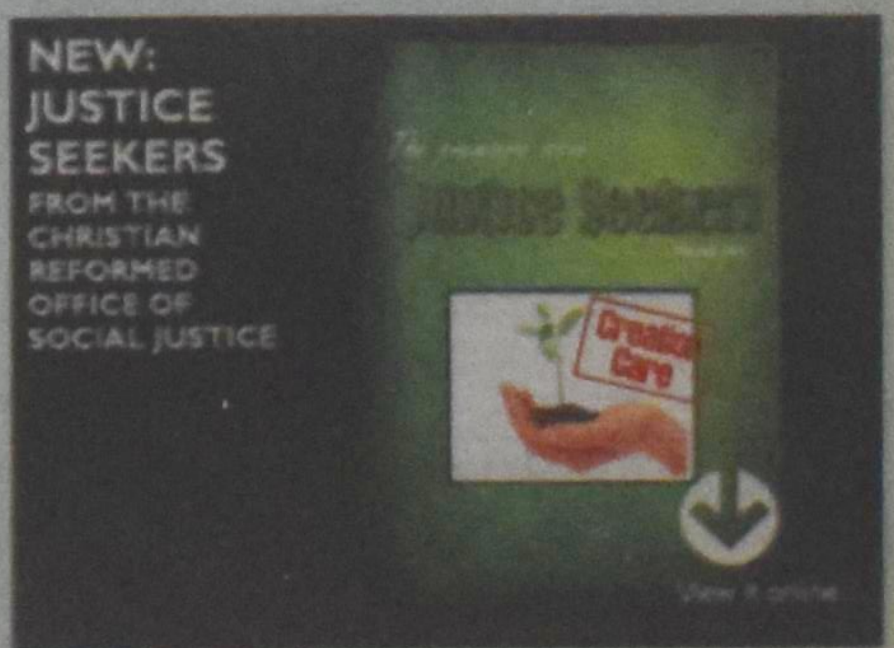
Cindy Verbeek works for A Rocha Canada: Christians in Conservation out of her home in Houston, B.C. encouraging and resourcing churches to be intentional about caring for creation within their church life. If you would like more information about A Rocha's Eco-congregation Canada initiative, or are doing something in your church that you would be willing to share, please contact her at cindy.verbeek@arocha.org or go to www.arocha.org/canada and click on Eco-congregations.

A ROCHA

Caring for God's World Together

Going further:

- Join in the discussions on the Eco-justice group on the CRC's Justice Seekers website at www.justiceseekers.ning.com
- Visit the Office of Social Justice website at www.crcna.org/pages/justice.cfm for resources and initiatives.
- Read the premier issue of Justice Seekers on creation care in the CRC church (available online or in print from OSJ).
- Use Cal DeWitt's *Earthwise* book as Bible study material for your small group (Available from Faith Alive Books).
- Find resources for becoming an Eco-congregation through A Rocha Canada at www.arocha.org/canada (follow the links for Eco-congregations).
- Join KAIROS' Re-energize campaign at www.kairoscanada.org .



	2	1				4		
			7	5				9
9					1			5
		8	3		5		7	
	4			7			1	
	3		4		6	2		
1			8					6
3				9	7			
		7				8	3	

www.sudoku-puzzles.net - medium